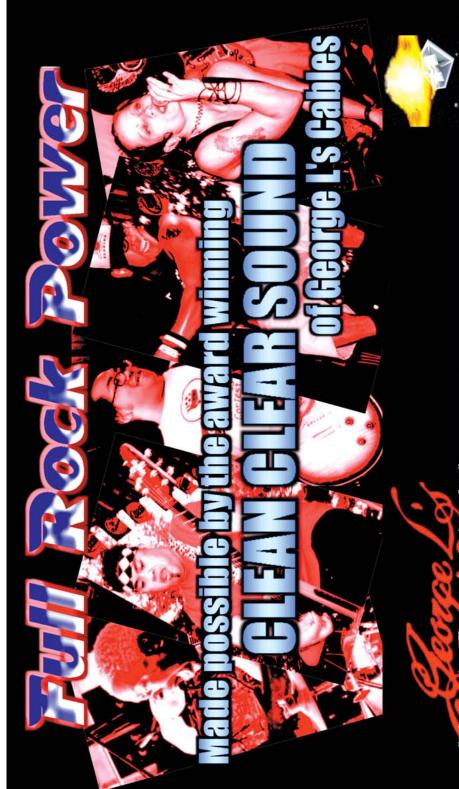


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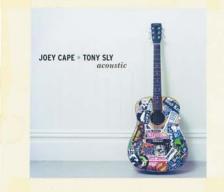


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SOUNDCHECK MAGAZINE

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SCM EDITORIAL

Since the wardrobe malfunction at the Superbowl, the pendulum has swung all the way to the right. The morale police are now out in full force threatening and fining anyone or anything they deem inappropriate or indecent. The FCC is now on a witch hunt forcing the radio and TV shows to "clean up their act." Now we here at SoundCheck don't necessarily support the use of profanity on the airwaves; we do, however, support the right to free speech. You may have heard about what the FCC is doing to Howard Stern, as far as imposing large fines on him and basically trying to force his show off the radio for good. So now the FCC has the radio stations so scared that they are editing out words in songs that have been played on the air for years. This will in turn just make listeners turn to Internet or Satellite radio. Satellite radio is still in its infant stage as far as its listening audience. The two major Satellite stations XM and Sirius still only have about 2 million subscribers, but they're hoping with the new FCC rules that have been imposed on commercial radio that more and more people will turn to Satellite radio. Unlike FM/AM radio. Satellite radio is not free with a monthly fee between \$9 to \$24 dollars, and you have to purchase a Satellite radio, too, which is probably why the service hasn't caught on so quick. But, Satellite wants to become to radio what cable is to television, offering music, news, sports, weather, etc. completely unedited and commercial-free. This is probably where the future is heading for the entertainment industry. Especially if stations continue to edit songs to make them appropriate for airplay. One thing artists don't appreciate is censorship of their songs, thoughts, ideas, or artwork. So Satellite radio will be the place to go for uninterrupted, nonstop music that can be heard coast to coast. That is unless Congress tries to start monitoring that too, as they are now trying to do with cable and the Internet. The only way to stop that is for all of us to contact our Representatives and Senators and demand that they protect our First Amendment right to Free Speech. It's time they stop playing Big Brother trying look out for what they believe is best for us. As Americans it is our alienable right to choose what we want to listen to, see, and read.

> - Teresa Francis Executive Editor

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THE PROPAGANDA

Kittie has settled its lawsuit against Artemis Records and have been recording its third release, titled *Until the End.* The band is recording at **Longview Farm**

Studios with producer **Steve Thompson** (Metallica, Korn, Simple Plan, Guns n' Roses) and engineer **lan Hatton**. *Until the End* is tentatively scheduled for a summer release. It will be Kittie's long-awaited follow up to *Oracle*, released in 2001. www.kittierocks.com...

Fire wielding, amazon bass player **Corey Parks** (ex Nashville Pussy) and **Duane Peters** (US Bombs), the infamous "Master of Disaster," launch an assault on the USA with their brand of kick-face, punk rock 'n roll when **The Hunns** new release *Long Legs Die Huns* (Bomp!/Disaster Records) hits the racks in stores nationwide this month...



The Massachusetts Cannabis Reform Coalition hosts Freedom Rally XV, September 18, 2004, on Boston Common, beginning at High Noon. The Freedom Rally is a Boston institution, providing education, entertainment, and enlightenment to tens of thousands of attendees each year. This year's theme, "Roll the Vote/Please Tax Us" highlights MassCann's ongoing efforts of letting the politicians know the people of Massachusetts want to end marijuana prohibition as we know it. Visit the website for additional information: Massachusetts Cannabis Reform Coalition: www.masscann.org...

Sasquatch and the Sick-A-Billys has new CD Burning Miles of Sin. It will be released by the end of May. Until then... you can hear three of the tracks before final mix down and mastering. Go to: www.sasquatchandthesickabillys.com (Click on SOUNDS)...

Boston rock 'n' roll band **Thundertrain** is the focus of a feature-length documentary currently being lensed by award-winning indie production company **Escape TV**. "Thundertrain: In Between Now & Then." Rewind to the summer of 1974. Five rebellious musicians from the suburbs of Boston meet for the first time. Rehearsing, writing, and dreaming in the basement of Jack's Drum Shop downtown on Boylston Street to their hometown Rat in Boston. To see the trailer go to: http://escapetv.tv/CurrentPro/current_prod2.htm...

The Boston, MA rock band **Pete Pidgeon & Arcoda** is touring in support of their independently released, debut CD ...At First Sight. Featured appearances on the disc include **Levon Helm** of **The Band, Nate Albert** of **The Mighty Mighty Bosstones**, **Ben Groppe** of **Addison Groove Project**, and others. Purchase information, as well as more details on the band and downloadable tracks, can be found on the band's official website at: www.arcoda.com...

Dropbox, newly signed to **Godsmack**'s **Sully Erna**'s Realign/Universal Records, will help celebrate the 20th anniversary of the popular **Transformers** characters along with **Atari**, which will roll out the new Transformers video game for the PlayStation® 2 computer entertainment system on May 11. Featured in the game will be several unlockable bonus tracks including the band's first single, "Wishbone" from their

self-titled debut, and a specially composed instrumental version of the Transformers theme song. For more details visit www.dropboxmusic.com...

In support of *The Trial of the Century*, out June 8 on StarTime International and produced by **Doug Boehm** (The Vines, Saves the Day, Guided By Voices), **French Kicks** will set out on a North American tour starting in NYC and ending in Montreal. They will be taking out the cream of the crop of great young bands—including **Ambulance Ltd, On the Speakers**, and **The Joggers**...

Sinai Beach will be hitting the road May 15-23 with

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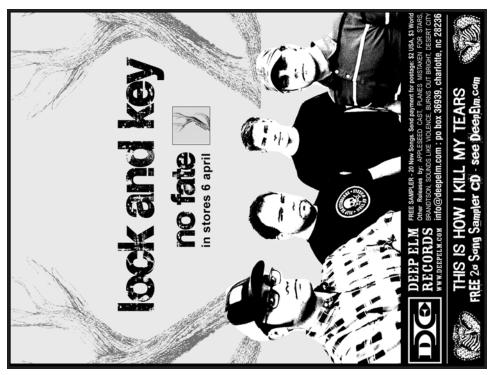


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THE PROPAGANDA

Throwdown and **Most Precious Blood**. The band is currently writing and preparing to record their new album, which will be released November 16th. Visit www.facedown-

records.com or www.strikefirstrecords.com for more info and tour dates...

Check out the new track "Renegade Style" from **Natural Chaos** (ex-Cooler Than Smack|Flip 22) at www.soundclick.com... Go to the Natural Chaos page and hear the MP3 in streaming audio - simple and easy. Look for the full-length in June...

Now out in Newbury Comics: **Dooz'** *Inner Demons*. For those who don't know, Dooz is a Taunton tattoo artist whose serial killer spoken word opus is popping up all over college radio. Not for the weak of heart or mind. For more 911 visit www.linoleumrecords.com...

The debut album *Reverse the Curse* by the Boston-based rock band **Johnny Most** has been released. For more details go to www.johnnymost.net...

Fearless Records will be releasing an *At The Drive-in Anthology* (enhanced CD) as well as re-issues of *Relationship of Command* (2000) and *Acrobatic Tenement* (1996). The anthology will contain greatest hits, exclusive unreleased tracks, rare B-sides, covers, videos, and exclusive live footage from one of indie rocks' most influential music groups. For the first time the entire *At the Drive-in* collection will be available from one source, Fearless Records. http://fearlessrecords.com/...

Late News Breaking, the major label debut from guitar rockers **Squad Five-0**, will be released on June 29th. The album, produced by **Matt Wallace** (Replacements/Faith No More) Go to www.capitolrecords.com for more info...

As part of the celebration of the **50th Anniversary of Rock 'n' Roll**, Memphis, the birthplace of rock 'n' roll, will host the "**Global Moment in Time**" on July 5, 2004. The "Global Moment in Time" officially marks the day when Elvis Presley recorded his first single "That's All Right" at Sun Studio in Memphis in 1954. It became a pivotal moment in rock history, so at 12 noon ET, radio stations around the world are encouraged to simultaneously play "That's All Right" in honor of the 50th Anniversary of Rock 'n' Roll. The original recording will be available live via satellite from Sun Studio with Scotty Moore, Elvis Presley's guitarist, launching the celebration. Go to www.goodmanmedia.com for more details…

Boston rockers Lyn Paul Junction have just released their new full-length CD, titled Bullzeye. Visit www.lpjrocks.com for more info...

Hot Rod Circuit's fourth studio recording, the second full-length for *Vagrant*, has been set for release this summer August 2004. Entitled, "Reality's Coming Through" the album was finished at Head Gear studios whose facility has recorded: TV On The Radio, Yeah Yeah Yeahs and Ambulance. Mixing was completed at famed Mission Sound both studios in Brooklyn with Producer Tim O' Heir (Dinosaur Jr, Stellastar*, All American Rejects). Early copies of the record will be sent out soon. So save some room in August for the newest band on the brink as the record is outstanding...

Capitol Records has set the upcoming release of *House of Secrets*, the eagerly awaited second album from acclaimed dark metallists **OTEP**. The album is due to arrive in stores coast to coast on July 27th. *House of Secrets* was produced by **Greg Wells**, (Deftones, Michelle Branch, and Elton John) and was



recorded at Los Angeles' Rocket Carousel Studios. www.capitolrecords.com...

Pop folk siren **Susan Gibson**, formerly of **The Groobees**, is touring in support of her solo debut, *Chin Up*. Susan produced her debut but she also credits everyone in the 512 area code for their help with the project. Go to www.susansongs.com for more info...

The album, A Hostage and the Meaning of Life, features 12 new songs by Fearless Records artists **Brazil**. For more information on Brazil or other Fearless Records artists, visit www.fearless-records.com...

Singer/songstress, Mass native and Maine resident, **Emilia Dahlin** will release her second CD (self-entitled), on May 15th, 2004. The celebration will take place at Space in Portland on May 15th, 2004. Emilia will be joined by her new band mates, **Adam Frederick** on upright bass and **Jon May** on drums. Go to www.emiliadahlin.com for more info...

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Live music in Inman Square has entered a new era as Boston/NY-based Willow Entertainment takes over booking at Ryles Music Club. Clubgoers will start to see an increasingly diverse offering of live music, including rock, lounge, soul, Americana, blues, fusion, and jazz, five nights a week. The recently refurbished interior now offers and even more comfortable atmosphere in which to enjoy the best in live music. Go to www.ryles-jazz.com for a full schedule...

Boston Beatdown has teamed up with Los Angeles-based Crosscheck Records for the release of their newest DVD documentary, entitled, Boston Beatdown: See the World Through Our Eyes - Volume II. The DVD is due out June 22. Visit: www.bostonbeatdown.com or www.crosscheckrecords.com for more info...

Read Yellow are gearing up for what's looking like a very busy summer. The band's full length debut, *Radios Burn Faster*' its the streets next Tuesday, May 4th on *Fenway Recordings*. Go to www.fenwayrecordings.com to stream some of the new songs! They've got a bunch of events coming up in the next few weeks to celebrate the release so make sure you check it out. In late May, looks like they'll be heading back to the UK...

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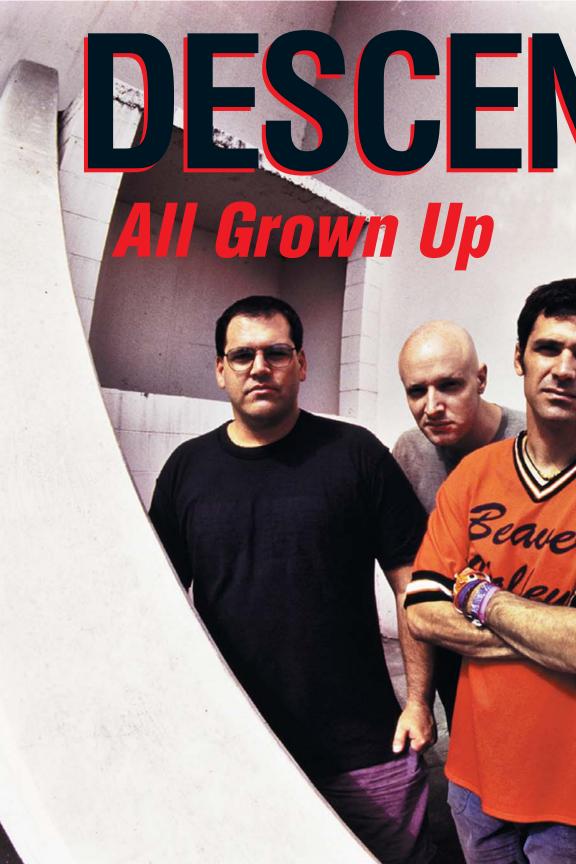


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By Cherry Valance Photo by Chapman Baehler

After ten years, marriage, several kids, and about a zillion cups of coffee, the Descendents are back. The founding fathers of the now inescapable "so-cal pop/punk sound" have just released *Cool to Be You* on FatWreck-Chords, and with it, prove that they still have it - sure as the caffeine pumping through their blood.

Now, I grew up in a town, where back during the '80s, the Descendents were revered as sort of punk rock heroes. They were average guys, just like any of us, who would pass through town once in a while, and rock our worlds with their "chainsaw pop" songs about puppy love, breaking up, and being stuck in that place between adolescence and adulthood.

Almost 20 years after they first started out on the road, the Descendents now write songs about marriage, their kids, and their relationship with a dying parent.

The Descendents haven't grown soft. They haven't lost that espresso-driven power that marked their place in American Punk Rock History. They've just, well, grown up a bit....

"We were geek geeks--le sweater that makes peop

SoundCheck Magazine: So why did you guys decide to work with Fat on this record as opposed to Epitaph?

Bill Stevenson: Oh, it's probably the most obvious reason you could ever have for working with a label, which is that Descendents are Fat Mike's favorite band, since he was a little kid. How many pictures of NOFX are there where he's got that ripped up "I Don't Want To Grow Up" shirt on? It's in like every picture that you see of them. He didn't even bother to get a new one, he just had the same old one. So it is every band's desire to be the favorite band of an owner's label. That puts you in the ultimate position. So that worked out cool. They were just the most enthusiastic. But that having been said, Epitaph did a great job with *Everything Sucks* and I got nothing but good things to say about Epitaph.

SCM: What was the catalyst for you guys deciding to do a new record?

BS: As we've gotten older it's just taken us longer and longer to do records. We've gotten more picky in our old age, more particular – particularly about material. It's not like we didn't speak to each other for six years and then went, Hey let's do a Descendents' album – it's more like, O.K., we finished touring on *Everything Sucks* in like '98 so by late '99 we were throwing around demos and hey I got these songs and you got these songs, O.K., wait, wait the wife's pregnant, I can't do anything for six months really. And then like, Oh my wife's pregnant....we had all these babies and then also my father – I moved my father into my house and took care of him during the last year of his life. So we kind of had all these things making it be delayed – things that when you're just a high school band that you don't have to worry about your father dying and things like that. I just think we moved a little slower but maybe the upside is that maybe now the quality is higher. We don't just pump it out.

SCM: Are you guys planning touring behind this?

BS: Here's another thing, Milo had another kid two weeks ago. Now he's got a boy and a girl. Now Stephen's wife is also pregnant and I'm not sure what the due date is, but after we get done with the baby stuff I can't see us climbing in the van and doing a million shows, but we'll try to get around where if people want to see us, they can.

SCM: On the band's website, there is a refere to the early Descendents as "hardcore." Do you think this is due to the bands you were playing with back then? (Black Flag, FU's, Straw Dogs...)

BS: Back then they used to call it chainsaw pop or like caffeine pop. I never really thought about us as being called a hardcore band.

SCM: I was kind of surprised when I read it. Hardcore would be the last word I would link to you. Are you still friends with any of the bands that you used to play with?

BS: Yeah I still keep in real good contact with most of the guys – all the guys in Black Flag and all the different singers that ALL has had, and the different guitar players. Yeah, I still get on with pretty much all of them. I think e-mail is really good that way because you don't have to extend some huge effort to stay in contact with somebody. You drop Henry an e-mail on his birthday kind of thing; he drops you an e-mail, like if he meets Black Sabbath, you know that kind of shit. I need to get some time because there's a few people that in high school that I was very fond of that I'd like to connect with and see what the hell they're up to but I've never done any of that.

SCM: In school, were you guys massive geeks?

BS: Yeah, well not like Weezer geeks. I mean, we were like geek geeks – legit geeks, not like \$150 sweater that makes people think they're geeks..... I mean, I would be the guy that got harassed by the hotdogs thrown at their heads by the football quarterback or whatever.

SCM: Do you guys have any bands that you would love to go out on the road with?

BS: There's a band called A Wilhelm Scream – I really like them. I like this band called Silent Drive. I'm hearing a lot of crappy shit on the radio, which is freaking me out but I'm also hearing a lot of really good bands that are sending demos all around. I think it's kind of cool. I think the evolution of modern recording techniques has just made it to where everybody sounds exactly the same. It used to be that Karl sits kind of behind my rhythm when we play, that's where he sits, when he plays with me, that's how he plays with me. And that makes a certain sound. Whereas like say Hagfish – Donny sits about 20 milliseconds in front of Tony, that's just where he sits. That's what makes their rhythm section sound

egit geeks, not the \$150 le think they're geeks.."

like their rhythm section and our rhythm section sound like our rhythm section. And the same can be applied to guitar and vocals and everything. But with the monitor and recording technique where everybody is just taking anything and putting it in the computer, what's called quantizing it all, making it all perfectly tight with each other's rhythms, it's making everybody sound the same. Like the bands don't sound different anymore because they're all playing the same song anyway and now they're all playing it the same way because of the computer. Nothing sounds different. It all sounds the same.

SCM: So which one of you in the band is the best musician?

BS: We all have our strong points – I'd say strictly from a feel standpoint, probably Karl. From a mechanical standpoint, probably Stephen – from a perfect, never makes a mistake standpoint. I mean I can play fairly accurately but I try not let it turn me into a robot. Milo in college he was actually taking music classes, so in a way, he had a more advanced harmonic knowledge than either of us did at an earlier age.

SCM: Does the concept of "ALL" still live within you?

BS: Yeah, the idea of "ALL" is just to not settle for – like one of my buddies says, "good in the enemy of the great." That's just kind of another way of looking at "ALL." Why settle for O.K. when you can do better. But if you become kind of compulsive, then it can get weird, too, and then you start drinking too much coffee and then you go psycho.

SCM: Well that leads me to what's your favorite kind of coffee?

BS: The rules for coffee have changed so much since the Descendents' "Coffee Song" heyday – it used to be you couldn't get good coffee just any old way – you had to hunt it out, you know. Now you can get good coffee everywhere. But at the time it was either crappy coffee that your dad made out of Folger's or whatever that you wanted to shoot yourself or else you had to go on a mission to get good coffee. I mean my coffee, I just like it the darkest, greasiest most disgusting beans – those are my favorites. So just like a dark Italian roast.

SCM: If you could only have one book, one album, and one person in your life, what would they be? **BS:** Wait a minute – you're asking me to choose like my wife OR my son or daughter?

SCM: No, that can all be one.

BS: I can't win then.

SCM: Your family, your wife and kids can count as one.

BS: Oh, O.K., well in that case I can choose *We Sold Our Soul For Rock and Roll*. So I'll choose that instead of just *Paranoid*. O.K., you've got my family, you've got *We Sold Our Soul For Rock and Roll*, and the book *The Royal Path of Lives* maybe. No, wait. *Unbearable Lightness of Being* maybe...

SCM: I'm actually reading "Identity" by Milan Kundera right now. The book "Immortality" changed my life. It just changed the way I look at things...

BS: Well let's go with a collection of Kundera works then.

SCM: What's your biggest fear?

BS: Not being able to take care of my kids.

SCM: What's the first thing you think about when you wake up?

BS: See first question about what I'm afraid of. I have a three-year-old and a six-year-old and I spent the first 15 years of my adult life saying that I'll never have kids, I don't want kids, and now I've spent the last six years of it going man, I wish I would have kids ten years older when I had a little more piss and vigor in me and I could work two jobs or whatever without it killing me.

SCM: Are they the last thing you think about at night?

BS: Yeah, I mean most of the time they're on top of me! If I'm working all day they don't see me enough so they'll get up out of their beds and come pile up on me.

SCM: If God were to speak to you right now what would He say?

BS: He would say, Don't let materialism or vanity get in your way and cause you to neglect the things that you have to take care of. **●**

Visit: fatwreck.com for more info



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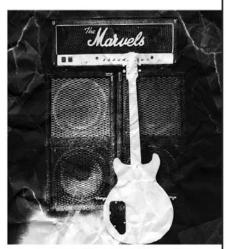
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INDIE RELEASES

LOCK AND KEY No Fate (Deep Elm Records) lockandkeyrock.com

The more I listen to this, the less I like it. That's odd—usually it works the other way. The guys can play, production is fine, songs are heavy,



vocals ain't bad...but there's nothing especially memorable. It's giving me this pretentious "nu-metal" vibe. That bugs me. The repeating guitar lead on "2nd Quarter Broken" is starting to loosen the fillings in my molars—he just keeps playing the SAME EXACT THING. Stop it! Play something else! O.K., that seals the deal: I don't like this. Sometimes I can't tell you what crap is, but I know it when I hear it...

- Smash

THE MARVELS
Cheat To Win
(Abbey Lounge Records)
themarvels.net

Here are all the things that healthy, growing kiddies need nowadays: a good dose of teen angst, a little greasy 1950s swagger, plenty of atti-

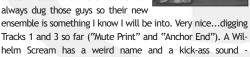


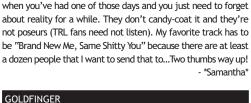
tude, a shite-load of Boston garage punk, some new-millennium production, and the Abbey Lounge. Enough said? No? O.K... There are very few times in life when anything is perfect. "...And Out Come the Wolves" by Rancid is perfect. "Fresh Fruit for Rotting Vegetables" by the Dead Kennedys is perfect. News flash: "Cheat to Win" is PERFECT! There isn't a single bad thing I can say about this disc. The more I listen to this, the more I love it! Put it this way: I can't listen to this just once—I have to listen to it at least twice through to get my fix. How's THAT for a recommendation? Marvelous. Fucking marvelous! I can't help but marvel at how marvelously marvelous this Marvels CD is!! CD of the month and the outright best I've heard in...well...a damn long time!

- Smash

A WILHELM SCREAM Mute Print (Nitro Records) awilheimscream.com

Nice - it's punk! Good punk! Whoa...looks like they used to be Smackin Isaiah..no shit? Small world. I always dug those guys so their new





angry/upbeat punk with an attitude. This is the CD you put on

GOLDFINGER
Live at the House of Blues
(Kung Fu Records)
kungfurecords.com

Episode 11 in the "Show Must Go Off!" series. O.K. What the? "No Disc"? Heyyy...wait a second! This isn't a CD! No wonder it won't play in my CD player - this is a DVD. Is this an April Fool's prank or something? I may look like an idiot, but I'm no fool... What am I supposed to do with this? I review CDs! We don't even HAVE a DVD review section. Are we behind the times or something? Hmm...staring down into this moral quagmire...this ethical black hole...I suppose that I could talk to the editor and try and get something like that going, but frankly, what's in it for me? No payola? No freebies? No Kung Fu shwag? I dunno...

- Smash

PIEBALD (Sideone Dummy) All Ears. All Eyes, All the Time piebald.com

Piebald stays true to their pop-punk and indie origins in their new album. Like their other albums, "All Ears, All Eyes, All the Time" has mostly happy, upbeat sounds with the occasional completely alternative song. For the genre in which they play, Piebald seems to get progressively better. All the sounds, as well as the lyrics, are fresh and interesting for the pop-punk scene. "All Ears, All Eyes, All the Time" is a great addition to any fan's library, as well as any person that wants an alternative pop sound.

- Ari Weinkle

QUICK FIX
The Push
(Lonesome Recordings)
quickfixrock.com

It's a four-member guitar-rock band with a pretty good sound. I'm not feeling the lead vocalist's sound but that's a personal thing. The lyrics are



good and the guitar bits are cool. I like the auto-wah deal on "Cut Outs." Nice idea that. "Love Is Like Ephedrine" is a medium-tempoed song with some cool, clean vocals. Here are a couple of lyrics from that one: "Heard your footsteps in the hall, ghost of the girl that wants it all... crashed down with a sound

so loud it shook the ground. She wants to rule the world and risk everything." I know that's a long quote but it's their best song. Solid drums and bass, smooth, crunchy guitars, and some pretty good songs. Yup, it's a good band. Other titles: "The Air Around Us," "21st Century Boy," "The Push," and "Last Chance for Action" with its zippy tempo, guitar hook that grabs you and '80s sounding chorus.

- L.A. Joe

AVOID ONE THING Chopstick Bridge (Side One Dummy)

Avoid One Thing deliver a knockout performance on their second album, "Chopstick Bridge." The band plays fun, punky tunes that sound much like Green Day, but with a greater energy and more intricate playing. Of the group, bassist and vocalist Joe Gittleman said "It's gone from a side project to a fulltime discussion. And this time it was much more of a group effort." The group who has gone from a quartet to trio does sound much more focused and driving, playing powerful, loud, and fun songs throughout the album. Highlights include the surprisingly country-tinged "Lot Like This," the anthemic punk tune "Renegade" and the album's most catchy song, "All AboutYou." These and the rest of the album's songs prove that Avoid One Thing are anything but merely a Joe Gittleman side project. They are a force to be reckoned with and if this album is any indication, it seems that they'll be putting out great music for a while.

- Johnny Gaffney

STREET DOGS/THE DENTS - SPLIT (AbbeyLounge Records)

This is definitely a great split from two great bands. Street Dogs, featuring former Dropkick Murphys' singer Mike McColgan, not surprisingly play punk rock in the vein of the Dropkick Murphys and Face to Face. The band's sound is reminiscent of



early Murphys' recordings, when McColgan was still at the helms and before the Celtic aspect of the band entered the equation. They play two great songs, "Savin Hill" and "One of a Kind" and if the rest of the songs on Street Dogs' album are anything like these two, I think we got a Grammy winner on our hands, or just a damn good album. Although Street Dogs play two amazing songs on this split, The Dents definitely do their share to make this split a great album with their unique brand of fun, catchy, and melodic rock. This split is loud, brash, and fun; a definite must-have.

- Johnny Gaffney

FIRE DIVINE (Deep Elm Records)

Fire Divine put forth a strong effort on their debut EP. Their sound is definitely emo, but the band jumps from post-hardcore screamo on one track to sentimental, poppy, and fair-



ly generic emo on the next. This drastic change threw me for a loop and put a major damper on the first two tracks of the album, where the band played their aforementioned hardcore screamo-esque style. Then, on the album's third and second to last song, the group threw in "Reputation Outlives Application," which fails to ignite the same level of intensity that all of the other tracks on this EP manage to do easily. This band definitely has chops, intensity, and an ability to write good songs, but their sound is not yet refined, resulting in a lack of focus on this debut FP

- Johnny Gaffney

THE HURT PROCESS Drive By Monologue (Victory Records) thehurtprocess.com

The Hurt Process is a typical, new hype, scream-o band. In case you're unfamiliar with the term "scream-o,"



it's that rock sound with screaming love lyrics bands like Thursday and Coheed and Cambrio love to play. The Hurt Process is typical because it's cool enough for a guy to like, while teen girls will also love it - which will likely comprise most of their fans. As for the actual music, it sounds good, professional, and is easily memorable. However, if you are not a fan of screamomusic, steer clear of The Hurt Process. They are original in their own way, but don't offer enough originality for a harsh listener to latch on to their songs. All in all, The Hurt Process is a good scream-o band that any fan of the genre will enjoy listening to.

Ari Weinkle

JON RAUHOUSE Jon Rauhouse's Steel Guitar Rodeo (Bloodshot Records) bloodshotrecords.com

Hmm...not quite a smorgasbord, but definitely a buffet table of steel/pedal/slide/Hawaiian guitars: jazzy country, '50s "cool," quasi-big-band, cartoon soundtracks, Western-sounding acoustic pieces, torch songs, and more! If they had dropped a couple tunes (18 tracks!) this could've gone umpteen different directions. Drop these three and it's a martini-drinking lounge album, drop those four and it's a country disc, drop these other three and it's a guitar-junkie instrumental record, etc. As it is, though, I can't pigeonhole this CD. It's eclectic enough to be on the fringe, but cohesive enough to somehow work as a single entity. Cool! Quirky, but cool. It's funny, even the PR folks don't know where to put this: the press kit is all over the place. So, in other words, everybody knows that this is way cool, but nobody knows where it belongs. THAT is cool unto itself. Cool! I keep using that word: cool. It applies here, though. As I think about it, there are only a couple genres of the instrument that are missing here: stuff like full-tilt bluegrass and David Gilmoreish ethereal distortion. Those wouldn't be cool—and this is cool! It just works. Cool, cool, cool, cool! ("Be cool! What's Fonzie like? COOL!!") I'll tell you what: get this CD and then you tell me where it belongs! See if you don't agree...coo...well, y'know.

- Smash



FROM THE FOUNDRY

SUFFOCATION Souls To Deny (Relapse Records) suffocation.us

Every day I would check the mail for this CD, when it finally arrived, I was like a giddy little school girl - I



popped it in the player and headbanged away for the whole 38 and a half minutes of this brutal death metal excursion from Suffocation. "Souls To Deny" is everything I expected from these guys and more. From the first track, "Deceit," which fades in with exceptional drums, to the last track, "Tomes Of Acrimony," with the fast and furious intro, you can totally see why Suffocation has been a force to be reckoned with for so many years. They have withstood time and metal changes like no other. The title track, #3 on the disk, has an erie beginning, like the devil waiting for his souls to arrive. The rest of the track brings it right down do the depths of hell. Track #4, "Surgery Of Impalement," is one of my favs; it has the kind of breaks and changes that make me want to jump in the pit and just go off. All in all "Souls To Deny" from Suffocation is definitely a must-have for all you death metal enthusiasts. Pick it up as soon as possible, Metal Wench has spoken.

- Metal Wench

PHANTOM LIMB
Veins Of Unholy Capacity
(Not Common Records)
phantomlimb.org

Plantom Limb

Thirteen tracks of unbridled death metal that is enjoyable from beginning to end, that is what "Veins Of

Unholy Capacity"from Phantom Limb is. No filler, no bullshit, just exceptional metal for your listening pleasure. These guys, in my opinion, have what it takes to be the next coming of Satan and take over the Metal world by storm. Track #6, "Shards Of Reality," has a great intro and fast beats that make my head

spin; literally, I think I need an exorcism. Track #9, "Butcher The World," is exactly what the title leads you to believe - kill, destroy and leave a blood trail of everyone in their path. I have to say it's my favorite track. Of course there are many favs on "Veins Of Unholy Capacity," like Track# 12, "Black Iris Rising," this is a track that I had a single for and would play it at least once a day if not more, just to make it through. I could go on and on about Phantom Limb's "Veins Of Unholy Capacity," but there is no need, if you know anything about death metal, you will not hesitate to see these guys live and buy the CD. Not later, not tomorrow, but right now. I'm telling you, if you don't there will be a curse on your head.

- Metal Wench

TAROT
Suffer Our Pleasures
(Metalblade Records)
metalblade.com

After seeing the extremely lousy band name, I prejudged this band to be a bunch of D&D lovin,' metal

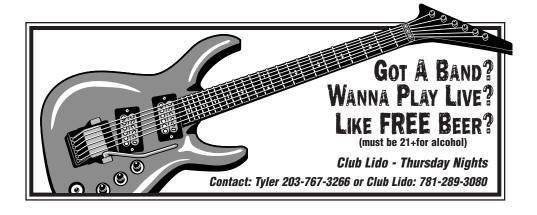


geeks who'd completely blow - but I was very wrong. Listen, while Tarot aren't the best thing since "sliced-operatic-metal" bread (crap, that doesn't even make sense! LOL), these guys CAN, without a doubt, hold their own. Here's a CD that will not be added to my "beer coasters for the future" pile, simply because of the musicianship involved, and the Children Of Bodom styled guitar effects - which I REALLY dig! If you like Manowar, or King Diamond perhaps, then Tarot should be a welcomed addition to your collection. File Under: Purty (yet evil) metal.

- Deek McDeekula

FLESHCRAWL Made of Flesh (Metal Blade) fleshcrawl.de

Fleshcrawl is a breath of fresh air in an increasingly stagnant



genre. Diversity has become a dirty word in some segments of the extreme metal community, but Fleshcrawl wears the term well. The tracks on "Made of Flesh" are unremittingly brutal, but are not one-dimensional. The lead guitarist has a great sense of melody



that he doesn't try and hide. The best elements of black metal, thrash, and grind are all on display, and some of the doom metal, Godflesh-esque big chord outros are stunning.

- Shawn Macomber

VEHEMENCE Helping the World to See (Metal Blade) vehemence.brutaldeath.net



Melodic death metal with dueling vocalists - one low growls, the other high-pitched screams. Loads of

good, fast riffs, double bass blasts, and slow chugga-chugga breaks. Musically, this is an inspired release, although in some places the vocals have too little form. Metal Blade records is doing an amazing job of saving death metal from the abyss of mediocrity it currently finds itself in, and Vehemence is another good step in that direction.

- Shawn Macomber

UPHILL BATTLE Wreck of Nerves (Relapse Records) uphillbattle.com



Fast, screamy metal-core with a pronounced Dillinger Escape Plan influence. Flashes of epic bril-

liance, but some dull spots, too. Some of the riffs flow naturally into one another, perfectly, precisely. But others sound like they were thrown in only to increase the "craziness factor," and not to further the song. Still, an admirable release, and probably insane live.

- Shawn Macomber

EVERY TIME I DIE Hot Damn! (Ferret Music) everytimeidie.com



I know the year is still young, but "Hot Damn!" is already clearly one of the top five records of 2004. It

will be difficult to top it all. The songs are a virtual ball of kinetic energy, chaotic riffs, flamboyantly bizarre lyrics, and all-out brashness. Keith Buckley's vocals are some of the most inspired to come down the pike in some time, reeling between Deadguy-ish shouts and a sassy Mick Jagger-esque swagger. You wouldn't believe it could work until you hear it. There is no substitute for this record; push back whatever purchase you had planned and pick this up.

- Shawn Macomber

HIMSA Courting Tragedy and Disaster (Prosthetic Records) prostheticrecords.com

Damnation A.D. meets Children Of Bodom? Himsa (not the greatest band name), who've been doing their thing since 1998, offer a pretty solid look into the world of thrash/speed through this water-tight offering. Containing members previously schooled through the ranks within Trial, Undertow, and Nineironspitfire, this band's all out guitar attack will leave you in quick need of a fresh new adult diaper. As for the originality tip, Himsa must have Slayer posters all over their collective swingin' metal pad...honestly though, I dig this CD more than some of Slayer's more recent stuff. The wrap up: Think Slayer with the occasional 'Maiden gallop-beat approach, fronted by an 8-foot, bloodthirsty ogre.

- Deek McDeekula

DEVIL INSIDE Prelude (Abacus Recordings) devilinsidemafia.com



Ladies and gentlemen, we do have this issue's winner of the "Crush Crown," and they are Minnesota's Devil Inside (Nothing to do with

INXS). I'm a little pissed that the band decided to release a measly four-song CD, I mean c'mon, it's like 11 minutes long, but these guys could make ole Beezlebub himself drop a steamin' load in his tighty-whiteys! THAT aggressive. Track #1 ("Loaded") is the strongest by far, and will satiate ANY Premonitions Of War fan. I DEFINITELY want to hear more.

- Deek McDeekula

DEATH ANGEL The Art Of Dying (Nuclear Blast) DeathAngel.com

This is THE ONE right here...well, "THE ONE" outta the four or five CDs I've covered for this month's issue. Anyway, I'm psyched as hell that Death Angel are back(!), having been a big fan of the band's "last" effort "Act III" (14 years ago!), and from my senses, these guys haven't missed a fin beat. If you're into "Peace Sells..." era Megadeth, and "the 'Into The Pandemonium Years" Celtic Frost material, then rush out and grab this one, man! It's a sonically updated version of Death Angel, but still with the old "charm." Be sure to give a listen to "5 Steps To Freedom" and "The Devil Incarnate." PLEASE stop by Boston on your next tour!

- Deek McDeekula

Metal Heads

SEND YOUR INFO TO: stephanie@soundcheckmag.net



Mid April - but in The Abbey it may as well be mid August as the heat of hundreds of bodies permeates the air of the popular Somerville hangout. The Marvels are on stage and with all their beer-spirited glory are giving this crowd just what they came for – rousing, uninhibited, brazen rock and roll. These purveyors of punk: vocalist Staffy, guitarists Zim and "Nice Guy" Jimmy B., bassist Michelle Paulhus, and drummer Jesse VonKenmore feed the enthusiastic crowd this night with tracks off the CD they're there to celebrate: Cheat To Win, released on Abbey Lounge Records. Living up to their name, The Marvels leave the audience drenched from this brilliant exchange of energy....or maybe that's just the beer... Four nights prior, Staffy and Jesse sauntered in to a much more subdued Abbey Lounge (well, it is a Monday, after all) to talk about their new album and other various topics. The band has been stirring up attention the past year - beginning with a change in lineup (Staffy and Zim are the two original members) and culminating a few months ago with their signing to Abbey Lounge Records. They're on a nonstop roll with shows booked throughout the Northeast as well as airplay, press, etc. Business aside, it comes down to a connection between a band playing their heart out and a label supporting that spirit.

SoundCheck Magazine: Was your goal to find an indie label like Abbey Lounge Records?

Jesse: [Founders], J. [Grimaldi] and [Malibu] Lou had decided that they wanted to sign three bands and sort of capture the vibe of The Abbey Lounge and their decision was The Dents, Muck and The Mires, and us. They're a good label and they're passionate and work really hard. We all drive each other fuckin' crazy but as you know this is not my first time around a record company and so far this has been the best.

Staffy: It's been really painless so far – I'll say that much.

SCM: That's good. There's enough pain in music.

Staffy: Exactly. There's enough pain in the ass without dealing with any kind of label or the artists. It helps that we all know each other and we've all dealt with each other before being in kind of a business type of relationship, so I think in general it's been really lucky on both ends.

SCM: I wanted to ask about the lyrics but I know that Zim writes most of them. I was looking at the titles and lyrics while I was listening to the CD and thinking: this is a running theme.

Staffy: We collaborate, Zim and I. He and I both have a very negative, dark sense of humor – whether it be a sense of humor or just a negative outlook in general. We just never felt much need to sing songs about lollipops, candy canes, and girls that we fell in love with. It never happened. Pretty much from day one, it's all been nega-

tive songs.

Jesse: It's even beyond that and it's part of one of the reasons I love being in this band so much – the entire message throughout two records, basically, is "I'm a self-centered, little prick – and I'm not even interested in blaming anybody – I'm past that. I'm just a bastard and I kind of enjoy it and if you think I have a low opinion about myself, you can imagine what I think about you." To me that appeals to me because I have that side to me. We all do. And in a sense what I really like about it is that it's kind of funny. It's funny but it's not funny.

Staffy: It's not like, "I want to be dead" or something like that – there's a small tongue and cheek value but on the opposite end of it there's definitely a very real thing that pretty much everybody can always associate with.

Jesse: Except that so many of those people – especially the lousy, shitty grunge people were all interested in assessing blame.

Staffy: It's not really meant to be depressing unless you take it like that...and it's not purposely dark.

Jesse: Look at the people in this band and show me a member who's had an easy life. We're not suggesting through the lyrics of this that this is a good outlook to have or it's the only outlook to have, it just works good with this music. It also cracks me up – I mean, a Jew writing a line like, "I gave my conscience up for Lent"? That's funny.

SCM: I noticed that line and thought it was clever. I don't think of your music as dark. I thought of it more like Staffy said, self-loathing: "I'm Ugly," "I Hate Myself," "I'm Alone" - what we all feel sometimes.

Jesse: It's interesting, though, radio stations right now are really concerned about lyrical content. First time I ever put out a record and had radio ask what's safe to play on the air. Everybody's freaked out about this FCC bullshit.

Staffy: And with the Janet Jackson and the boob show – which by the way wasn't even that great of a boob.

Jesse: No. It wasn't. But the funny thing is we had no idea until we looked, there is only one swear in our lyrics. The word "shit" appears once in this whole album. It wasn't by design at all. It's by accident.

Staffy: It's the same thing we were talking about earlier about how the album is a little more rock and roll than the last one. Same thing with the vulgarity. I mean the last record there was tons of F this, F that, F you, and this one is just like, nothing. There's no vulgarity at all. It's kind of curious.

Jesse: Which is kind of weird because this record is so much darker than the last one. We didn't know the FCC was going to do that anyway. And we would not care.

Staffy: I mean if the FCC is going to be all angry over a flashing kind of thing, at least we could have got a good tit out of it.

SCM: I get this vibe both on the CD and in the live show of this huge release of emotion. Is that how it feels?

Staffy: Yeah, I'd say so. I'd say for me personally I think it is. I know for Zim it is. When I first joined this band, I

was much more of an alcoholic than I am now. I was really bad. I was cooking full-time - I really wasn't doing anything. I definitely think it's one of those things where when you go out and you play a good rock show it's just so fucking awesome. I love the music I play and I like what I'm doing.

Jesse: You know it's funny because Staffy's at the point of relating it to the booze and stuff and that sort of said a lot. I stopped drinking years ago and if I was drinking, I couldn't play. It's not the drinking – it's the stopping drinking. I can drink, I just can't stop. For me, it's not like oh let's get all pissed off and get on stage-it's just the most fucking alive thing in the world. But you know, life is fucking hard and shit happens and we've all been through some crap. It's just the most fun – this band is so much fun to be on stage with.

SCM: How did you hook up with Marc Schliecher and Nick Zampiello at New Alliance Studios?

Staffy: I've always liked everything that's come out of New Alliance that those two have done. They have an amazing ear and are great musicians as well. So I was working with Marc at Newbury's and we would talk forever – it was like a big debate, where are we going to go to record this thing.

Jesse: And being The Marvels and being lazy we decided on a recording studio that was right down the hall.

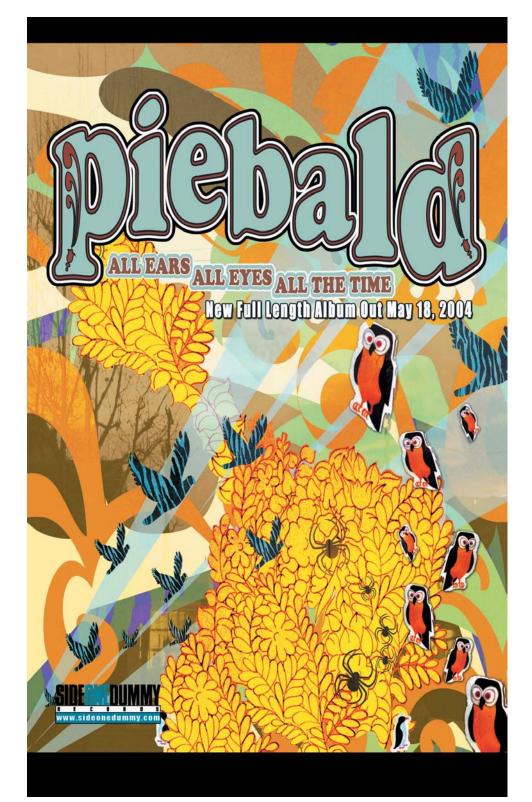
Staffy: No, this worked out good. I liked them and respected them very much before we went in and did it and doubly afterwards. They did a great job and it was a lot of fun.

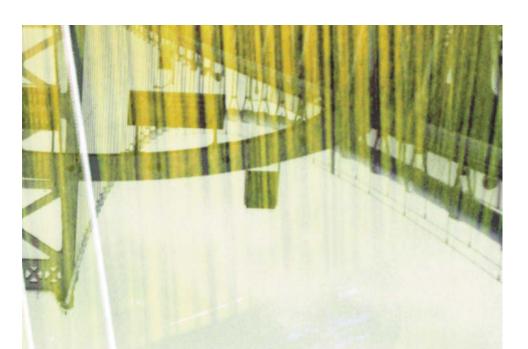
Jesse: Alvan Long, too, who owns New Alliance and Curve Of The Earth and is a great supporter of Boston independent rock really made it possible for us for it to be affordable to get in there. It was realistic money and realistic expectations. They were great.

SCM: I want to bring something up back to Abbey Lounge Records up do you think there's this perception in the Boston scene that, "Oh this is an Abbey Lounge band"? You're not just an Abbey Lounge band Staffy: That's really been tossed around lately by a lot of people. All I can figure about that whole thing is people like to pigeonhole. I think there's a good family vibe over at the Abbey; everybody is real supportive of one another. I'm proud of it. I think it's a good community.

Jesse: Yeah, I kind of wanted to get into this a little bit, too. We now regularly play in MA, NH, ME, CT, PA, and News York. There's talk of national tours or maybe Europe later in the year. I'd love to do that. I would like nothing more than to watch Staffy get drunk in the Alps. It would amuse me. It's important to play out of town. We'd like to go where we're wanted, where people are jazzed about seeing the band... But I'm very proud of being an Abbey Lounge band. We'll always take a bit of The Abbey with us wherever we go.

The next Marvels show is May 8 at Axis with The Street Dogs & Avoid One Thing; and May 22 with The Riverboat Gamblers & Turbo ACs at the Middle East Upstairs. Visit www.themarvels.net for their latest schedule.





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KNOW YOUR INDUSTRY

By Karl Russo

A Look At E-mail

Hey folks! A while back in the Keeping The Fans Informed installment we talked about e-mailing your fan base to let them know what is going on with

your music. This month we're going to do a little refreshing on that and take it a little further.

Your fan base and local industry professionals are the core of what can assist you in becoming successful. Keeping them informed is very important but when using e-mail you need to be careful as there is a line you need to draw on e-mail frequency and you also need to direct your e-mails to the right people so they don't get deleted without being read.

First, you need to set up an account. If you're taking your band seriously, get an account through your domain registrar that looks something like yourname@yourband.com. Each band member should have an e-mail like this but it is necessary for only one member to have this if money is rather short. Try not to use any of the free web-based e-mail services for band business, as they don't look all that professional. The person(s) with this e-mail should be the point of contact for business issues related the band and should be the one(s) composing and sending the e-mails.

The next step is to get people on the list. Design a spreadsheet that has fields for people to write their name, e-mail address, town, state, and whatever other info you might want to collect such as age. During your set it's a good idea to announce that you have an e-mail sign-up sheet but it is even better to have someone approach the club patrons during and after your set asking them if they'd like to sign up. Maybe you can offer a free bumper sticker or demo CD if they do. If you have a merchandising booth, make sure you always have a sign-up sheet there as well.

O.K. Now for some e-mail etiquette. Cold e-mailing radio stations and other industry professionals can be a good thing sometimes but most of the time the e-mails will just get deleted. You should obtain permission from them before adding them to your list unless they've indicated somewhere that they don't mind getting on e-mail lists. When sending the e-mail, be sure to hide the addresses of all the people you've sent it to so as to prevent people from obtaining addresses they shouldn't have. Make sure you know your recipient. Many business deals these days are initiated via e-mail but do some research to make sure they're right for you. If you're looking for a manager and you contact someone who does only PR, then you're going to look ridiculous and get no results. Also if you're a metal band and you contact a magazine that features only urban music, asking them for a review, you'll get the same results...none.

Now let's talk about the e-mails themselves. The most common e-mails sent are ones promoting gigs. These should not be sent more than once a week unless you have a really big show coming up then maybe you could send reminder e-mail after the initial one. Be sure to include anything of interest about the upcoming gig such as a new CD being released, new songs being premiered, if you're playing a showcase, or if it is a local radio station-sponsored event. Include the name of the club you're playing, its location, phone number, door time, if it is 21+ or 18+ and names of the other bands on the bill. Pay attention to your e-mail sign-up list and don't send someone in upstate New Hampshire an e-mail about a gig in Boston or south of there. E-mail newsletters are another good way of communicating but they should be sent no more than once a month and should only be sent when there is something pertinent to report like the release of a new CD. See you next month.

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THE RACK SPACE

By Rich Papa

2nd Step

Hey folks how is everyone doing? Let's get cracking, shall we. Last issue we talked about the cycle of 5ths and how each step connects with each other. This month I want to take it from the second step of each scale, which is called the Dorian mode. Let's quickly familiarize ourselves with the chord

formulas for each mode. Ionian is Major/Dorian minor/Phyrgian minor/Lydian Major/Mixolydian Major/Aeolian minor/Locrian 1/2 dim. O.K., this month we are going to go through the second step and play the chord with the 135 riff as well. These are great patterns because you will hear and understand how everything connects like a puzzle. Now when we are playing the chord patterns, hold them for a whole note count and 1 beat per measure and play the riff on a 1/4 note count 4 beats per measure. Notice on the chord patterns it is the 3rd of each chord that determines major and minor. On the locrian it is the 3rd as well as the 5th, which is flatted as well. Before you play the riffs I want you to take a moment and play the chords first and hear how they connect with each other. Dm/Am/Em/Bm/F#m/C#m/G#m/D#m. Later!! - Rack

WORMUPS - ALTERNATE PICKING DOWN 1- UPZ- DOWN 3 LIP 4 m 4 Jue-1, 3,5 Dm - DFA Dm 2 10 Am Am-ACE 12 10 14 1=m EM Em- EGB 210 12 10 14 12 Bm-BDF# 10 Bm Bm 14 12 16 14 F#m-F*AC# 4 12 14 12 16 14 C#m - C# E G# 4 12 C # m NHM 16 14 18 16 G#m- G#BD# 16 14 18 16 D#m - D# E# A# 13 11 -15 13

Rich Papa and The Rack Space is sponsored by George L.'s Strings and Chords.

Send feedback via e-mail at: papalzzy04@msn.com





THE ACE OF BASS

By Alan Andrade

Chord Notation

Come on Summer!! Ace of Bass here with this month's topic: Basic chord construction theory. All musicians that are somewhat serious about their playing should understand at least the basic principles of chord structures.

As bass players, it is especially important to understand this theory as we are in a very important role as the dictator of chord harmonies. By just changing the root or alternative note we play with a chord we can change the whole sound and movement of the music. When we are creating lines it's also good to develop an ear to be able to distinguish the chord class just by listening. This is invaluable to creating bass lines on the spot, especially when a chord chart is thrown in front of you (jazz) and you are required to create a bass line on the spot!

CHORD NAMES

Chord names have two parts: The root note and a token for the structure. So "Amin" says: the root is "A" and this chord has the minor structure = 1 - b3 - 5.

One exception: when the token is missing and only the root note is written, this is the major chord (the "default," so to speak)

CHORD STRUCTURE

The structure of a chord lists the root-relative intervals that build this chord. The intervals are listed in ascending order. Again: when played, the notes don't have to be played in this order. This is called inversions.

ROOT NOTE

Of course the root note can be anywhere in the range of any instrument.

CHORD STRUCTURES

Here is a (very short) list of chord voicings and what interval structure is behind. Don't care that you don't know most of these chords now, it's just to show the principles.

Full name Structure
maj (or none) major 1 3 5
m, min minor 1 b3 5
dim, o diminished 1 b3 b5
augm, + augmented 1 3 #5
7, dom7 dominant 7 1 3 5 b7
6 sixth 1 3 5 6 sus47, 7sus4
suspended fourth with seventh 1 4 5 b7

Chords can be built by stacking triads. As there are two triads for the simple three-note chords, there are four possible chords: major, minor, diminished and augmented. Chord formations are written as list of intervals. Chord formations are independent from scales and even from the real root note. Only the interval structure defines its sound and behavior. The four most common three-note chord are made with major thirds and minor thirds. These chords have the interval structures major=1 3 5, minor=1 b3 5, diminished=1 b3 b5 and augmented=1 3 #5 The sequence of the three notes does not change the name! Hope this helps a little. Till next month, make sure you educate yourselves on everything about your instrument whether it be new gear, recording techniques, players, etc. It is all important in being a better all-around musician!



SPOTLIGHT THE SINGER

By Jeannie Deva

Why Vocal Technique? - Part One

Can you sing the way you want and not hurt yourself? Is it possible to understand what you're doing technically and still sing emotionally? Can vocal

training help you expand your creativity? My approach to vocal technique is motivated by a firm belief that the voice is meant to be fully used; that there is a way to release yourself from restrictions; that it is not the sounds you make but rather how you make them that causes difficulty.

This method is an outgrowth of my years of research and work with thousands of contemporary singers. It also comes from my experience performing and recording many forms of rock, blues, jazz, pop, folk, Gospel, R&B, and funk. The demands placed on today's singers are complex due to the use of electronic equipment, band volume, club conditions, and the trend toward singing and dancing simultaneously. Using your voice for a wider variety of sounds than those used in classical music requires specific techniques to aid and support those sounds and prevent vocal blow-out.

I have found that many popular music singers shy away from taking voice lessons. Fear of being stripped of their individuality or of being pushed into a limiting, emotionless technique, or from developing sounds inappropriate to their music, has kept them from learning the tools that would help them sing easier and more successfully.

I used to feel the same way. During my early years of singing, I thought that if I went to a teacher to learn "vocal technique," I would end up sounding the way the teacher wanted me to sound and lose my own style and individuality. It was frustrating and a little scary to hear some teachers state I would wreck my voice if I continued to sing rock styles.

What Makes a Technique Right - or Wrong?

There are many confused vocalists, unsure of what to do or not do when singing. They are uncertain whether the directions they have been given are correct. Too often, I have found decisions of "right" or "wrong" are based on lack of information, personal taste, or the fear that singing in a certain style is physically harmful. By 1976, my head was spinning with contrary techniques and confusing directions. I decided to find out what defined "right" and "wrong" and discover a way to release myself from anything that would pull back the reins on free, spontaneous, contemporary-styled, "feeling" vocals. I knew the definitions would have to align with scientific fact, not opinion. Though I'd been singing professionally for many years (I started in my early teens), I knew very little about how my voice worked. I began by reading scientific journals and medical books, looking only for fact on how the human body functions to create vocal sound. I found what I was searching for I learned the parts, locations and how the body makes vocal sound. I then compared it to the various directions and information I'd heard throughout the years. I found that some of the directions and exercises aligned exactly with the natural functions of the body. And some did not. At that point I knew what to maintain, what to discard, and how to synthesize the knowledge into a holistic approach to singing. The result has given me confidence with and expansion of my own voice and style. Singing correctly means working with the way your body naturally functions to make sound. Without knowing the facts about your vocal instrument—its parts, their locations, and how they work—it's difficult to be certain you're doing the right things. You can also easily fall prey to incorrect coaching and techniques that don't perfectly align with your instrument. And, it will be difficult to realize your full potential as a vocalist. Working from an understanding of the body with techniques that support natural vocal production, you can easily produce a wide range of sounds. This includes what some would consider "unorthodox" sounds commonly found in rock, soul, blues, country, funk, R&B, heavy metal, dance, rap, and Gospel. The thousands of singers I've coached have found they can successfully create the sounds needed for the styles of music they choose!

Jeannie Deva is acclaimed to be one of the top voice teachers and recording studio vocal coaches internationally. She is the Founder and Director of Jeannie Deva® Voice Studios, now celebrating its 25 Anniversary, and of The Deva Method® - A Non-Classical Approach for Singers™. Clients include many local, national and international acts. Contact: Jeannie Deva Voice Studios; www.JeannieDeva.com; Boston and Arlington: 617-536-4553; Cape Cod: 617-413-0243; Los Angeles: 818-446-0932.



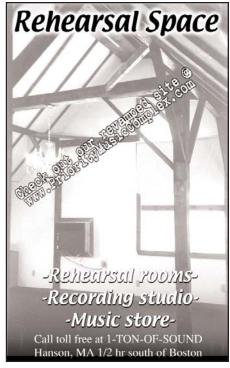
DOES YOUR MOTHER KNOW YOU DO THIS?

By Joel Simches

Episode 30: When the Unthinkable Happens

The sage prophet Murphy once said that anything that can go wrong, will go wrong. That wise statement is never truer than for musicians at a gig. In addition to the Musician's Survival kit we talked about in Episode #26, there are some bands who even rehearse several contingencies when things go awry. Having a "string break" song in tow or an acoustic instrument at the ready for when the PA breaks down in the middle of your synth solo, perhaps even having an entire acoustic set ready for those nights when the drummer disappears for days after one of his infamous benders, are all great ways of preparing for the worst. It is also a great idea to have a "missed soundcheck" opening song where each musician gradually builds into the song so that the sound engineer at the front of house can ease the levels into a state of sonic chocobliss (TM). Have the singer use the "anyone from out of town??" story for when the bass amp explodes after the third song, or have your guitar player show off his boffo tattoo he got in the Philippines. Remember: Nothing can bring the momentum of your show to a screeching halt better than something beyond your control and if it can happen, it will. The show must go on!







My first live experience of Phantom Limb and I dubbed them the White Stripes of death metal, so I was a little scared that the mystique would be lost with the addition of a bass player. My feelings were put to rest very quickly. With the release of *Veins Of Unholy Capacity* from Not Common Records and seeing Phantom Limb live there is no doubt that Ryan, Kamil, and newly added bass player, Kevin make up what I think is one of the best death metal/melodic artists coming out of New England today. We met up at Spike's Junkyard Dog in Allston, the food and talk flowed - along with the french fries.

SoundCheck Magazine: So how long has Phantom Limb been together?

Kamil: About three years. My senior year of high school I put an ad on the Metal Update classified. Ryan and a kid, another guitarist, from BU responded. Also a kid I was in a high school band with played bass. **SCM:** Obviously that didn't work but you and Kamil stayed together and stuck it out, which must have been

a little difficult, you know, just the two of you playing out for over a year. But now you have Kevin.

Ryan: Yeah, we went through a couple of other people, none of which worked out. So now we're working on Kev getting up to speed.

Kevin: Up to speed. Yeah, now you have to tune.

SCM: The new release from Not Common Records is your first full-length CD, "Veins of Unholy Capacity." Who did the bass for that?

Ryan: Me. It's kind of silly, me playing bass. **SCM:** Who does the writing, is it a collaboration?

PL: Yes.

Kamil: Ryan pretty much writes all the lyrics. As far as guitar, he's written about 90% and me about 10%.

And I come up with the drums.

SCM: I've been listening to "Veins Of Unholy Capacity" for a while now and it seems like there's some certain patterns, like stories, going on?

Ryan: Early on we suffered at great lengths.

Kevin: Are you talking about the practice space with the hole in the wall?

Kamil: No. Things were going pretty well at that time.

Ryan: When we had four people all in the room at once it was a little chaotic.

SCM: Is that where "Phases of The Moon" derived from?

Ryan: Yeah, that song was pretty much written on the spot because of that situation.

SCM: "Phases of the Moon' was one of the first songs you guys wrote, so how about the others on "Veins Of Unholy Capacity"?

Kamil: The last song we wrote for the CD was last winter.

SCM: So you pretty much had everything ready, just trying to get the studio and such for recording?

Kamil: We did the CD ourselves on my computer. I recorded the drums in my basement and then brought it upstairs to the computer. Then Ryan laid down his tracks, guitars, and vocals. I pretty much mixed it while I was in school, MASS ART, on my free time.

SCM: Right, you have all the equipment at your disposal.

Ryan: Yeah, there was no drunken rampage where you would get the spending money for the studio and spend it on a pound of heroin.

Kevin: A pound of heroin! What record company is that?

Ryan: Whoever Megadeth worked for.

SCM: Funny. Who did the artwork? **Kamil:** I did that. Suffered through that for a while.

SCM: Don't stop at that, tell me the whole thing. **Kamil:** I go to school for graphic design, so I do it

every day anyway and the cover art was another extra project that was on my shoulders all the time, so it was kind of weighing on me a lot.

SCM: Time and pressure. Not to mention you are the youngest guy in Phantom Limb. On that note I want to know some of your influences, especially since there is a seven year gap between the three of you.

Ryan: At The Gates, Megadeth, Suffocation, but I don't know if that influences how I play.

Kevin: In 4th grade I was listening to Reign In Blood.

SCM: Let me guess: Jersey bands?

Kevin: Then I guess you could say my nu metal phase was Bon Jovi.

EVERYONE LAUGHING

Kevin: But I was listening to them the same time I was listening to Slayer, Metallica, and Anthrax.

Kamil: Swedish bands, In Flames, Opeth. Slipknot really got me into death metal and their drummer really influences the way I play. I've been kind of shying away from the more straight-up death metal nowadays and more into melodic bands.

SCM: See I knew there was going to be far and wide range from you all. That's great that all those different bands (Bon Jovi) have brought you together as Phantom Limb. Well you got the CD out, which was a great release party at the Middle East on Easter Sunday; what's next?

Ryan: Write new stuff. We're going to see what kind of writing chops this guy [Kevin] has.

SCM: Oh, you are making it a total collaboration. So that means you will be going into the process with a whole different approach. Do you think stylistically it's going to be different or a forward continuation of what Phantom Limb is?

Ryan: A forward continuation.

Kamil: We will put it together and see what we can

Ryan: Some good riff might slip out while horsing around, while warming up.

SCM: What about branching out other than all the

New England states you have played?

Ryan: We are going to play in Long Island around August.

SCM: I told you what I thought of your music originally, awesome death metal, and now with the bass player added, I like it very much, so I was wondering how you would describe your music style.

Ryan: Not straight-ahead death metal - definitely not like Suffocation or Morbid Angel or anything like that. I would say we have more groove.

Kevin: Honestly I've been thinking about it for the past couple of weeks and I don't think you can genreize us. I can't find even a couple of bands that sound like what we're playing.

SCM: I can see that. I definitely don't know any other band that sounds like Phantom Limb, that's for damn sure. Even though it makes it hard to say where you would fit in the genre realm, you can fit with a lot of different types of bands. So in my book that's a good thing.

Ryan: Our music is a little crazy, too.

SCM: Why is it crazy?

Ryan: There is a lot of changes and some of the riffs are really hard to play.

Kevin: It kind of reminds me of old school thrash. You know play a riff like four times, then switch over, switch over and switch over again, by the time you get halfway through the song you don't know where you're coming from anymore.

Ryan: That's the kind of thing that I really like, though. The kind when you play a riff for four measures and play it four times is too slow for me.

SCM: O.K., where do you want Phantom Limb to be, say, in five years from now?

Kevin: Third record and tour bus.

Ryan: I think we should be on our fourth record by then. It would be really cool to be like a band like Overkill and just put something out every year.

Kevin: I would like to play on the Jersey Shore. Other than the beautiful shores and hot trash, they have a lot of that.

SCM: Wait, trash is hot?

Kevin: Well it's a little dirty, but dirty hot. Anyway, they have an amazing metal scene, Dillenger Escape Plan exploded out of there.

SCM: Do you agree with the other guys - on the fourth record in five years and play the Jersey shores?

Kamil: As long as it's still fun and we're having a good time

Kevin: And it's not a grind. If you get to play music everyday of your life, you don't need anything else. Well other than food, sex, cigarettes, and beer. But playing music for the rest of your life is GREAT!

SCM: O.K., well, see you on the road and in your tour bus five years from now. Don't forget me, O.K.? **●**

Thank you to Yi-Soon restaurant in Allston for letting me park in their employee spot so I could do this interview. Get the new CD "Veins Of Unholy Capacity." Then get your ass to see Phantom Limb live Friday, May 21st at O'Brien's Pub



The Worcester-based trio Thinner have often been accused of being fickle about the style of rock music they play. The band remains the same three members, and although their sound has grown and evolved considerably, they don't feel they have actually flip-flopped from genre to genre on each of their four CDs. Bass player/singer Neil Lucey, guitarist/singer Danny Rugburn, and drummer Craig Wilson finally fight back against the notion that they can't make up their minds. Lucey did most of the talking for the trio. "Danny and I had played together in this band Pop Skull prior to Thinner. That was a straight-forward punk band," Lucey said. "So when we started off with Craig and renamed it Thinner, it tended to lend itself more to that straight-forward punk, noisy, loud sound. Eventually, we tried to see if we could make something other than just a three-chord standard progression punk sound. We try to experiment with different textures and sounds and go after some things different things that we wouldn't have in the past." Having played together for such a long time has resulted in a solid chemistry between the band members. Their sound textures weave together seamlessly, with myriad notes from quitar and bass rubbing briskly against each other to create dissonance and tension.

"We're good friends before we're good band members. I've known Danny forever," Lucey said. He and I have been playing together for so long. I know what he's going to do before he does and vice versa. Craig's very laid-back. He doesn't say a whole lot, but he has a great sense of humor. As far as playing goes, he's as much of a songwriter as anyone in the band when it comes to arrangements. So the chemistry in how songs come together is very, very easy. I don't think we've had an argument or disagreement at all. It's like, 'Yeah, that's fine. Let's try this. Let's try that.' Everybody's pretty open- minded when it comes to the music."

"Someone comes in with an idea or one pops up during practice, and we all do our part to mold the song," Wilson added. "No one's afraid to speak their mind. It's the best band I've ever been in as far as personalities go. There's no dictation."

The trio has been nominated for the best band award in numerous categories, punk, pop, rock, depending upon how their latest album sounded to the people organizing these contests in the Worcester area. Lucey was hard-pressed to explain why some people think the Thinner sound seems to keep changing genres.

"Any time anybody asks me who do we sound like, I have a really hard time answering it," the bass player admits. "It's not like we're going after a sound, per se. Danny has a certain guitar sound that he likes. He never uses effects. He doesn't like them, refuses to use them. He plugs directly in. We used to be this guitar sound that we had. Then we thought, 'We're not going to change much of that, what can we do to the songs to work that guitar sound in differently, and make it so the songs get a little bit different?"

Lucey has taken on more of the lead vocal duties. He used to just play bass and sing backup. With Thinner, he started to write. "I don't know if there's a lead vocalist. Danny and I share the vocals," Lucey explained. "Lately, I've tended to sing more of the songs 'cause I come up with the words faster than he could. The last

recording, it seems I sang more of them. We never really had a tag or a label for who's the lead or who's not. Whoever comes up with the idea at practice and steps up to the mic and sings it just keeps singing it."

Thinner's plan and vision going into the studio to record the new *Vessels* album found them focusing on fewer songs at a time. "Every other recording project we had done, we basically went in and got as much of the tracking done, bass, drums, and rhythm guitar and come back another time and do some extra guitar parts, vocals, and be done with it. With *Vessels* we wanted to treat songs individually. We tried to treat little clusters of songs like their own little project."

Lucey's song "Sparkle And Shine" has a definite hit potential because of its punchy chorus and sweet harmonies. Thematically, the lyrics are aimed at getting someone to feel better about himself. The driving urgency with which Lucey sings and the band plays makes it a catchy anthem.

"It could be about a lot of different people. In parts it's about my wife. In parts it's about my son. In parts it's about people l've known." The songs tell people, don't be so down on yourself or feel so bad about things. You sparkle and shine." Lucey does not really know why he composed the song. "We never really discuss what a song is about or who it's about or what it means."

Thinner's other standout cut, "Waiting," penned by Rugburn, features that driving sound. A frustrated urgency comes out in the music and lyrics. "You've got big plans," Rugburn said. "You're waiting for stuff to happen to you. You try to make the right decisions and you try to do the right, and nothing ever seems to come your way. It's about waiting until your ship comes in."

Thinner recorded Vessels with two different producers in two different studios. The first producer was David Minehan at Wholly Mammoth studios in Boston. "It's like hanging out with your buddy," Lucey said. "We spend more time laughing and joking and talking about music and the state of the world as we do recording the songs themselves."

To get a different approach with different nuances, Thinner completed a second batch of songs with Roger LaVallee at Tremolo Lounge studio in West Boylston. "Our friends from Huck introduced us. They talked about how highly they thought of working with Roger. We started working with him a few years back. He's just one of those people you could spend every day with and never get bored or tired of his company."

Lucey said Thinner does not sit down and try to sound like anyone else. He does enjoy the music of The Hoo Doo Gurus and The Godfathers, The Ramones and the Robert Pollack-led Ohio band Guided By Voices. GBV "put out four or five records a year and they're all brilliant," Lucey said.

After recording four albums, Vessels, Sonic Dinner, The Roger Project, and the debut, in eight years, Lucey does not see where his trio has strayed from its original roots. "I don't see how it's changed a great deal," Lucey said. "I think there's some elements of our punk roots or something in there and good old-fashioned straightahead rock, and I think there's some poppy elements in some of the melodies and harmonies. I don't know where we fit. I suppose a pop-rock band if you have to pick a genre. That seems to be the safest for us."

Thinner's sound is marked by the dovetailing of Lucey's bass notes and Rugburn's lead guitar work. "I think it stems from Danny's guitar playing style," he said. "Danny has these chords he calls 'K-chords.' It's not unique like something you've never heard before. It's the way we play off of each other. If he's playing a song and the four chords are D, G, and A minor, I'm probably not playing any of those notes on bass. It's just this textural thing that we've learned by mistake or by happenstance over the years. As a result, that texture or layer gets a more darker, brooding tension because it's not like the perfect pop song where the chords all match and the choruses are all lined up."

"We've been playing together for so long that we have the same interests," Rugburn said. "We want to have the same result, and that's a decent, quality sound. We really don't have to talk about it too much. We just kind of know if it's good or it sucks. If we spend too much time on something, it's never going to happen. The best songs just come right of nowhere. Sometimes all we have to do is look across the room at one another and we can tell whether it's going to work or not."

Wilson feels the band has evolved naturally over the years. "We definitely were on the rough side of things when we recorded our first record," the drummer said. "I think we've become a little more polished in our recording. But I don't think our overall sound has changed dramatically. Danny doesn't use any effects when he plays guitar. He actually doesn't believe in them." Lucey credits drummer Wilson - whom he calls the one true musician in the band - for keeping the string instruments anchored. "He's the only one who has taken lessons," Lucey said. "He's the most solid player. He never misses a beat while Danny and I might do something stupid once in a while." "He's more patient than we are," Rugburn said of Wilson. "He has some good insights into the ideas we come up with. We always run things by him first before it's a done deal. He has some pretty good ideas about music, as compared to some drummers who just beat the hell out of the drums. He actually knows about music. He's definitely a major contributing factor to all of our songs."

"I guess they feel as though I'm the one who keeps the time in the band, but that's the drummer's job any way," Wilson said. "None of us really feel like we're 'true musicians.' We wonder what other bands would think if they saw us rehearse and how we put songs together and the way we talk."

Lucey admits that marketing is their weakest point. Thinner, he said, would like to play outside Worcester and get around New England and the East Coast but their personal commitments keep them busy. For now, listeners can catch Thinner in their usual Worcester nightspots.

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THE AMPLIFIE

DEFAULT OUTFIT Casual City defaultoutfit.com

Catchy song writing, poor performance production...that's what we have here with Default Outfit's "Casual City." Despite the sonic flaws, Default Outfit does manage to serve up some pop rock selections akin to the Matchbox Twenty vein that are at times quite enticing. "Every Word I Said" kicks "Casual City" off and offers some lively guitar riffs from Brian Hayes and Tom Brunette, as well as some vocal hooks also from bassist/vox Tom Richards that complement the work of Hayes and Brunette. "Any Questions" shows DF's softer side and weighs heavily on the above-mentioned Matchbox Twenty reference. "Masguerade" is guite a lengthy one clocking in at 7:33 and is a departure from the typical jovial structure that bands like this inundate their CDs with as it is much darker and displays a more focused harmonic vocal structure. "Awash Again" shows just a hint of pop punk as they heavy it up a bit and manage to show another musical facade and still hold true to their signature sound. "Casual City" reverts back to the feel good pop rock and as a result asserts itself as a good selection for a title track. Much of the remainder of "Casual City" is quite similar to the previously mentioned selections, which is part of what I think DF is trying to convey...no surprises, simple pop rock that many a crowd can take a liking to. They've done just that. - Karl Russo

STEREOGIRL From Beginning to End stereogirl.com

So I was thinking angry chick rock...not even close. Stereogirl is a bunch of guys that are not bringing anything special to the table, sadly. I am up to Track 6 and I have not been impressed thus far. Typical rock - boring drums- undistinguished lyrics and this irritating chorus effect on the vocals. No press kit, no website...who are these people!? Maybe they got the hint and went back to their day jobs? Let's hope so. I can sum up "From Beginning to End" in two words: Don't Bother.

- *Samantha*

ALACRITY Sunshine of Eyes <u>alacritymusic.com</u>

"Waking up and I found my fists in sleep were ringing the tears out of my sheets." I'm quoting the opening lyrics of "The Chant" one



of my favorite songs by this quartet of young, good-looking nurockers. Got lots of acoustic guitar powered lite-rock but then, sweet songs like "Falling Dream" have electric guitar supplying the chords, but it's clean and chorused. More good lyrics on this one and the drums, bass, and vocals are solid. "Burn the Show" gets a bit heavier with its gigantic snare drum and Yeslike vocal arrangements; I'm loving the laughter in this one. It's a clean-sounding band with good players and songs. Other titles of note: "Running a Mile," "I Can Tell" with its strumstrumming rhythm and happy melody and lastly "Ego." I like 'em.

- L.A. Joe

STOLEN BIKE CRUSADE Lisa Marie stolenbikecrusade.com

So I have heard about these guys for a while - they are the kind of

band with that really catchy name and the guys who look like the kids you went to college with...but



they're not. They are some kick-ass musicians with an interesting twist on the punk/hardcore genre. The band itself is much like Samiam meets Texas Is the Reason but the vocals are just plain different. I don't think I have heard something so all over the octave in a while. The CD is pretty rad; respinable tracks include "Amnesia" and "Keepsake." I have to give credit where credit due for the line on their website that says, "What we are prepared to do is let the music speak for itself." There we go! I despise those 52-page longs bios documenting Joey's first drumstick or Jeffy's first guitar lesson - gag me! I am all about letting the CD give me an impression - not a bio page...and the impression I got was ROCK.

- *Samantha*

TRICIA KELLY Keep On Movin' Tksingsdisco@hotmail.com

Wow...this is so funky! It starts off very classical sounding - a little twinkly piano but then Tricia busts out with her funky-disco~ish singing and you are just blown



away! I am fucking amazed! Tricia rocks...her voice is incredibly sexy, harmonic, and just plain gorgeous! I have repeated the first track three times...at this rate I might get these reviews done for a week! "Keep On Movin" literally makes you get out of your seat and shake what your mama gave you! I love her style, blending the funky/soulful/sexy vocals with this contemporary, yet funk- enhanced backing music. I have yet to find a track that I don't adore - and I did finally make it through the entire CD but here are my "top" picks: "Keep On Movin," "I've Got Me," and "Bad Habit." You owe it to your CD collection to buy this disc!

- *Samantha*

VINTAGE RADIO Invite Me In vintageradiorock.com

O.K. so it's pretty rad - retro-ish rock with a slight '80s influence. I really like Tony Lombardi's voice - he has a very commanding tone that I don't think I have heard from a local rock band in a long time. Yay - a band that includes song lyrics in their booklet - SCORE! "I've been curious for a while now, who's first to break down, should I take the risk and ask? Why don't we try to meet sometime...That's right - you needed something work related, and I will try to get back to you a little later; return the favor, when it comes around to me again." Sometimes you love a song at first listen - other times you read the lyrics and they just speak to you and fuel this need to hear it all played out. Vintage Radio is one of those bands. If you just put the disc in and cruise to work- you'll dig 'em (no doubt!) but if you sit down and read through the lyrics you will seriously fall in love with these guys (like I have!).

- *Samantha*

VERS Amor Proximi dysgenicrecords.com

So normally anything electronic does not make its way near my CD player....but this is different. It's a remix/compilation album and it isn't techno like you're thinking. Dysgenic Records has compiled a CD with artists so varied in style (emotionally and musically) that it truly is captivating. The first track "Bourgeois" by Vers (pronounced Verse) was not my cup of tea at first...but I set it aside and came back a few days later to discover that this CD is all about ambience and mood. It's kind of like drugs...it just takes the funk you're in and enhances it. Listening to the CD as a whole is like hearing a story...all these little chapters and sidenotes blending perfectly for a comprehensible feeling of "groove." Song worth a second spin include "Fundamental Flaw" by Comcast (these guys kick some major ass), "Playing Hallways" by The Gaussian Surface Project, "uM" by Gabriel Cruser and "2sixteen" by Vers. I bet you're sitting there thinking I've gone soft by recommending an electronic CD huh? Well maybe I have...or maybe it was just one of those records....

- *Samantha*

CHIP TAYLOR & CARRIE RODRIGUEZ The Trouble with Humans

This a collection of 12 rootsy, intimate songs. The production is splendid. The album was recorded at Rear Window. Carrie's and Chip's voices compliment each other like a pair of old Levis and a nice broken-in pair of cowboy boots. Chip's harmonica playing through out the recording is as tasteful as you can get. Carrie's fiddle playing is right on the money. Song writing is mature and understated without being pretentious. This a great CD. I highly recommend it to fans of Lucinda Williams, Allison Krauss, and Steve Earl.

- Tony Savarino

STU WALKER (Odd Halo/Coke Dealer)

(Aka Nick Zampiello) and Ethyl Bourbon (aka Michele Morgan).

This CD is fantastic. The opening track "Theft Arson Vice Murder and Death" left me going, what the fuck just happened. Picture Brian Eno, DJ Shadow, Tom Waits, and Joe Meek producing a '40s jump swing band. Lyrically this is black humor to the fucking nth degree ("The Sweetest smell of piss and Grime Jesus shouldn't waste his time"). Ethyl's singing is superb. The vocal arrangements are great. I love this! I love all the samples and the guitar sounds. Ear candy for years. I can't believe this is coming out of Boston!! Go buy this now and tell your friends to buy this CD.

ELLISON Always Something ellisonrocks.com

Ellison has raw vicarious energy. They also have a healthy dose of good old-fashioned jam chemistry. The pop rock spotlight comes to bear on "Coming Around" and "Breathe." They roar in with some good hooks and punching emotion. For new and old school underground pop fans alike, the band hits extremely close to the mark. The production is decent enough to get the songs heard, they are represented well enough, but my guess is they are better in a live setting. Although not a serious buzz killer, the one stalking this release is the microphone-shy vocal tracks and the tightness of the band overall. This sound goes from an intimate natural fit to a decidedly loose and awkward one, with bustling changes fueling the songs at moments, yet dropping the groove at others. This aside, an excellent out-of-the gate effort. With a little clamp-down on the tightness issues...this band could polish up into a gem for local indie rock fans and beyond. They appear very close to rocking the house.

- Space

- Tony Savarino

RAYMOND 01 raymondrock.com

Raymond's debut CD serves up some crafty power punk. And it proves to be some spiked punch at its in-your- face best. Straight up, these



songs are very good; the production is a bit heavily dipped yet basically dead-on accurate and the musicians give solid performances. The drum work drives through the material like a 1970 Dodge Charger engulfed in flames through detour signs, the heavy melodic bass lines riding shotgun. Inventive, fresh, and unmistakably cool, this was more fun to listen to than it is to watch controlled demolition...well...O.K. almost as fun. The track "Trust Me" scratches that elusive hard to reach pop sensibility itch while remaining defiantly original. To-the-point melodies and strong clean vocals complete the sound of this edgy local band. Five short songs in the punk tradition, with "Soft Touch" being so short that it ended up sounding just plain unfinished. This album seems more like a gig demo than a full release, yet still a righteous effort that serves as a highly energetic calling card for future releases and live performances. The hidden blurb track reminiscence of a Ween outtake and the low-key artwork offers a glimpse into the underlying abstract humor this band seems to possess. This type of lunacy leaves you thinking these guys are having some real fun doing what they are doing.

Which always makes for good listening.

- Space

ZERO WHITE WINE WINTER LIGHT <u>Jsdevault@earthlink.net</u>

With their first official release, White Wine Winter Light, this Providence-based band has explored a huge variety of rock styles. My moods while listening to this album fluctuated so often, I wasn't sure exactly what to take from this album. I found most of it moody and somewhat punk-ish. With tracks like "Infinite Sadness," I heard unique sounds that were dispirited by bland vocals that were overly repetitive. Although that same track was the only song that caught my ear with a respectable guitar solo. The album explores two different vocalists that I found had nothing to offer one another. I give them brownie points for catchy rhythms, but all in all I was rather aloof with the album.

- Jessica Morgan

SARAH RABDAU Benevolent Apollo <u>sarahrabdau.com</u>

Soothing and powerful. Two components of an album that are somewhat rare. "Benevolent Apollo" seems to have been something I've



been waiting for because I cannot get enough of it. I hate to compare, but Tori Amos comes to mind when I hear Sarah Rabdau's debut album. Although, Sarah adds a different kind of artistry to her spiritual approach to refreshing pop music. This voluminously talented woman has infinite potential that pours out of her music with every note. I especially admire the use of a string trio in songs like "85 and Breezy" and "Where Are You Tonite." The whole album is just so relaxed, it could take any kind of day and turn it into a distant hallucination. I have much appreciation for this artist. I was nothing but intensely impressed.

- Jessica Morgan

EMOK Crumbs emok.net

These dudes have really created a ton of baggage for themselves. Why? 1) Their press kit makes them look like a wimpyass emo band. 2) Their name is ignorant, in all capitals, too damn close to "ewok" from Star Wars, AND has "emo" right in it. 3) The CD artwork is probably the worst I have seen. The outer cover is bad...the inner is horrible and pointless! 4) The only real substance in the CD package is a little diatribe that is printed as a spiral under the CD. I made it about three sentences and four spins of the whole case before I said "Fuck this!" and gave up. The kicker? This is a great little EP! These guys sound like Rage or Tool or something! Wow. Really well done — samples, great guitar sounds, hip polyrhythms, good grindage, etc. — the vox could cut through the mix a tad better for my taste, though. Damn, this is sweet stuff! Somebody needs to jerk a knot in EMOK's tail and get them a real name

and a decent-looking CD package, though. The surprise of the month...

- Smash

HEATHER HATES YOU Operation Suckerpunch heatherhatesyou.com

Takes off like a shot and reminds me of the Vandals/Kung Fu "sound." Melodic, full of pep, sometimes poppy, intelligent /



comedic, a little this and a little that; all in all very cool. Excellent production, artwork, songwriting, and performances: HHY has the whole package! Great CD! Keep your eyes and ears open—I'll bet they put on a heck of a show!

- Smash

NOT AT ALL Labels Are For Jars notatall.net

More is not always better; I cannot emphasize this enough! This CD is a perfect example. Cut 4 (5?) songs out of the 17 (18 without the mystery track) and this disc might make sense. As it is, this is a train wreck. Dump a couple tunes between tracks 8-13, trash the cover of "Dust in the Wind" (which isn't necessarily a bad version...but this tune really needs to stay dead), and kill anything with an introspective/arpeggiated guitar part. Then you'd have a strong 12-tune CD that holds up. I'm not saying to have 12 identical-sounding songs, but there needs to be one theme to glue everything together. This is such a mess that I can't separate out the shining moments; all I hear is jumbled chaos. That being said...I keep listening to this CD trying to come up with stuff to say. Y'know what? I don't want to listen anymore. I've listened to this at least seven times and I'm done. There's nothing really spectacular to grab me (except for the PR letter-hilariously effin' brilliant!). None of these tunes are that memorable ("Howard Rockinn" being the exception-as a goof). It ain't bad, but it's not that great either. I'd give it either a B- or a C+.

- Smash

THE CANNIBAL KINGS Lovers Rock wetworks.net

O.K., this is Caribbean/reggae/etc. combined with metal. Not an entirely bad concept in my estimation. This disc drags like you wouldn't believe, though! Most of the tunes are pushing AT LEAST five minutes. There isn't enough variation in the tempo, the beat, or anything to substantiate the length of these songs. I couldn't smoke enough chronic to get into the jam zone with these guys. It's just too much of the same. "Dirty Emie" is short, sweet, to the point, has variation from verse to chorus, and is rocking! (nine more of those and they'd have something!) Most of the other stuff is a monotonous mess. Taken as a whole, "Lovers Rock" has its moments, but they're too few and far between for me to recommend this disc. Sorry. Nice beef heart, though.

- Smash

CHEECH A Day Late and A Dollar Short (Dank Records)

Hardcore is one of the hardest styles of music to critic. It's always hard to judge whether or not the endless distortion, almost inaudible vocals, and repetitive drum beats come together to form a masterpiece that makes you want to go insane. Unfortunately, Cheech overdoes each of these. When used in moderation, distortion is an incredible tool. However, when each song is distorted, and there is no break in power chords, it becomes extremely repetitive. This shows in this album in particular. Their first song, "Cheech 2000" is a fairly good song. The guitar and vocals are stable and sound good; however, in the next song, everything sounds the same. The same is true for every song on the album. As the album progresses in turns more and more into unoriginal sound that makes the band seem a second rate, wanna-be hardcore band.

PLAN 17 Laying Awake plan17.net

Plan 17 is a great ska band. There entire assemble works on an excellent level that shows how much ska rocks! In their intro, for example,

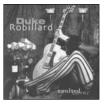


they lay down the top four regular ska beats of all time into a purely instrumental composition. This made me anxious to hear their vocalist. When "My2Cents" started, their vocalist fit easily into the instrumentals. His voice is easy to hear and what he sings is clearly thought out. An incredibly important portion of a ska band is their horns and sax. Plan 17 has great musicians that play the all of the instruments incredibly well. For a ska band, Plan 17 will make anyone want to skank until they can skank no more!

- Ari Weinkle

DUKE ROBILLARD Exalted Lover dukerobillard.com

Duke is a guitar player/singer with parts of some gorgeous babe all over his CD inserts (Oops - did I say that?). Well, she is beautiful but the songs are bluesy and rocky



and I'll try to keep my eyes on the girl... er... I mean the music; my ears that is. (Whew.) So Duke wrote almost all of these great songs about girls and such. (Aha... there's the connection). The song titles are a dead giveaway: "Down Home Country Girl," "Real Live Wire," "Exalted Lover," "Deep Inside," and "Love Made A Liar Out of Me." Got the picture? He's got 12 folks listed on the CD besides himself. You know, rhythm section, piano, couple horns, and vocalists for harmony vocals and one or two that share the limelight. So uh, what about the guitah? Yep, Duke plays a twangy-bluesy like-type style for themost part that fits his songs to a "T." Nice job.

- L.A. Joe

THE PUG UGLIES Go For Broke thepuguglies.com

There's a lot I like about The Pug Uglies. First of all, if you like the Dropkick Murphys you'll love these guys. They have a great punk rock



sound without the Irish tone the Murphys have adopted. Mainly, The Pug Uglies work together, combining typical punk rock sounds, with a flare of originality that makes them really great. The songs scream for a live performance with their easy-to-understand lyrics, and head-banging beats. I am going to be honest and say that their musicians are not amazing but work with each other to produce a great sound, as other bands seem to be drifting away from nowadays.

- Ari Weinkle

THE BENDERS Mountain Radio pigpilerecords.com

And mountain radio it is. Yee ha! Bluegrass music. Honey hush the hillbillies will be a-kickin' and a-pickin'. It's a five-piece and complete with banjo, dobro, and mandolin. They write 'em, they sing 'em, and they play 'em well. I love bluegrass like-type stuff, it's one of the true art forms, Americana. "Seven Long Years" sports all the sad sentiments of unrequited love. I can blah blah on about the lyrics and such, but suffice to say it's all well done: good players, good songs, good times. Titles: "Cheers To The First Snow," "Shovel Full of Dreams," the happy "Double Yellow," "Snakebite," "Racin' Till the Break of Dawn," and the closer "Liquor is Your Best Friend" with its amusing stories and chorus change-ups to money, women, and religion as your best friend. The banjo player is no Bela Fleck, but he tickles me purdy. Soooo-ee!

- L.A. Jeb

JON HASSELL The Making of Spring EP radarrecordings.com

May I quote from the enclosed info sheet: "... a journey into an expanse of ethereal, effects-soaked guitars and minimal avant garde soundscapes grounded by somber acoustic passages and lilting vocal melodies." I couldn't have said it better myself. John sings and plays acoustic guitar and writes these somnambulant efforts loaded with reverb and other sonics. He's young and handsome and has a gentle, calming voice. He's also got a fairly high range as evidenced by his singing on "One Day" with its electric guitar lines repeating the chords with echo, and some bizarre FX to tickle your ears towards the middle and end of the song. I'm loving the stuff; might work in a movie or as background music while one gets a massage other titles: "Introduction," "Can of Rain," and "Allston."

- L.A. Joe

KENNE HIGHLAND AND HIS VATICAN SEX KITTENS Be More Flamboyant

It's a happy, good-time, party like-type band. Five guys bang-

ing their guitars and drums and having a ball. The songs are your basic rock and roll guitar bits with pentatonic melodies and simple lyrics with two exceptions: they do a rock cover version of The Temptations' "My Girl" and another one of the Young Rascals' "Come On Up." We're not breaking any sonic boundaries here; just sounds like a bunch of guys who love to play and they do just that. Other titles: "Max Headroom Must Die," "I'll Show Them Who's Mod," "Not Too Shabby (At The Abbey)," with repetitive chorus and "Whooo!" punctuation, and lastly "(She's Not Just Another Girl) She's A Darlin'." It all sounds like big fun and you know, fun is the best thing to have.

- L.A. Fun

KABIR Fuel For The Fire

After hearing reviews of Kabir's acclaimed album "Cultural Confusion," I was expecting a lot from this album and the rapper's second full-length release exceeds my expectations. The most striking



aspect of Kabir's music is his lyrics, which offer more than the run of the mill rhymes about clothes, cars, and women. Kabir's skill in grouping words together and intellectual lyrics are present throughout the album, particularly on the album's most political song, "Hunger." On "Hunger," Kabir rhymes "Innocent Lives are taken on both sides/That good versus evil talk is just American pie." Such an agenda is rarely expressed in current hip-hop and if so, rarely done so eloquently as Kabir." Other lyrical themes are more personal, like on "Family Feud," where Kabir and special guest Lady K of Red Pill tell the story of a family falling apart at the seams. These superior lyrics are matched with complex hip-hop beats and arrangements in the vein of Esoteric and Atmosphere. Guest appearances with Esoteric and Shuman, among others, further enhance the wide array of styles on the album and after listening to the album it's clear that Kabir is fully capable of rapping alongside such hip-hop heavyweights.

- Johnny Gaffney

JOE MAZZARI BAND Scary <u>joemazzari.com</u>

And scary it is. I'm guessing they recorded this themselves. Whoops, nope. We won't mention the studios involved; must have been a late night deal with the second string engineers. Anyway, onto the songs. It's retro '80s sounding stuff with big drums, crunchy wall-o-sound guitars, screamy vocals blah blah blah. You get the picture. I'm not hearing a hit song here, but there is something appealing about their energy and the garage quality recording isn't doing them any harm. Perhaps lo-fi was an act of volition as opposed to lack of skill. (There... does that make up for dissing the sonics?) Titles: "Parole Time," "Bad Voodoo," "Straight To Hell," and the Zep-sounding "World Gone Crazy" not too God awful. Write some more songs and spend a few more bucks on your next. Trust me.

- L.A. Joe

ALL PARALLELS You Won't Feel a Thing allparallels.com

It's a three-piece guitar band; you know the lineup, bass player's the singer. "No one gives a damn about you, but I do" is the hooky chorus



from cut number one "Marrow." Got a nice guitar hook and some solid power-drumming as well. "Load a Gun and Kill Me" is the most radio-friendly of the five with its grab-you opening line, catchy melodies, and interesting chording. "Hex" is the uptempo cut. It's got another interesting guitar line cruising along under the surface but I'm liking "Nymphomaniac" with its naughty lyrics, killer bass sound, and punchy drumming. Last on the CD is "That'll Never Be Me." Not their best song but it doesn't stink either. It's a good band, wish we got a picture. Now go ahead and write that smash hit single I know you've got in you.

- L.A. Joe

LAKE BOONE lakeboone.com

Geez, EQ those guitars a bit will ya? Gotta make room for the vocals. So hint, hint, I wish the lead vocal was a DB or two louder; dude's got a nice voice and I learned a long time ago, if you get a tight belly trying to hear the vocalist, someone's too loud or the vocalist is too soft. Anyway, it's a nu-pop rock band with two guitars, bass and drums and they all sing, save the drummer. I'm loving moody cut number four, "Launch Me" with its 6/4 feel and sombre guitar mood. Then it switches to a shuffle like-type dotted eighth to a shuffle like-type dotted eighth deal and percolates for a bit. Got some great sounding guitars here and there - very natural and organic (organic?) sounding. Right. So here come the titles: "Look Around," "I'm Alive" and a zippy version of Cyndi Lauper's "Time After Time." Pretty good little rocky quartet you've got there.

- L.A. Joe

SHAVE LIBRARIAN Uncle Joe shavelibrarian.com

Hey... wait a minute... I'm an uncle and my name is Joe. (Not sure what the hell that has to do with anything) they mention on the enclosed info sheet that "Uncle Joe is featured in the independent film, "20 Questions..." Cool. So it's rocky and has an amusing air about it. Not that it's a comedy like-type song but they do repeat "Uncle Joe you did it right" ad infinitum. Then the guy talks about how he sold his color TV and went off into outer space. OK. So when does Alan Funt jump out to let me know I'm on "Candid Camera." But geez, the lead guitar stuff sounds good. I'll give 'em one thumbs up cause I'm just that kinda guy.

- L.A. Joe

JOHN MCBREEN Wanderlust johnmcbreen.com

Very professional sounding CD. John plays acoustic and elec-

tric guitars, sings and wrote most of these songs. He's got five other folks helping out on drums, bass, keyboards, more guitars, percussion, and background vocals. The tunes are pleasant to listen to and the lyrics grab you. Here are a couple of 'em from cut number three name of "Black Cloud:" "... there's a black cloud following me/spitting cursing, blowing chill/blinding, freezing, testing my will." Well, I like them. Easygoing, acoustic-powered songs with a competent rhythm section and John's silky, low tenor voice. I'm liking "Long Road" best of the bunch with its underlying energy. The other three titles are "Ship of Dreams," "One Look Back," and "Touch of Nature." I'm giving John two thumbs up.

- L.A. Joe

OBLIQUE One Must Begin With One oblique.cjb.net

Complicated rhythms, sometimes-enticing melodies, and abrupt time changes, accent these oddly structured instrumental compositions on Oblique's "One Must Begin With One." Oblique is clearly not for the musically weak or self-indulgent as these tunes are very much in the progressive realm. A little bit of Rush, a little of Pink Floyd, a little more of Frank Zappa, and a lot of strange sounds evident in "Stillness Inside" consisting of nothing but bell-like chimes and "Tangent" an odd musical duck weighing heavily on the use of keyboards with no direction as to where the tune is going, is what we hear . Overall, Oblique's music does have it moments of technical talent displayed, but much of it becomes stale as there is very little direction in their music and each track is almost a carbon copy of at least one other selection on the record.

- Karl Russo

HOOTMAGNUM Trucker Rock hootmagnum.com

Hoodmagnum refer to themselves as "... an alternative hard rock quartet based out of Southern New Hampshire." We've got the standard guitar band lineup of bass, drums, guitar and a lead vocalist. Though they mention Nirvana, Stone Temple Pilots, Alice In Chains, and Soundgarden as influences, I'm hearing more ZZ Top. We've got straight-up R&R songs, most with crunchy guitar and attitudinal vocals. I'm even feeling a little southern rock in the simplicity and gravelly vocal delivery. It's a nice enough sounding band but we're not breaking a lot of new ground here with the pentatonic melodies and three or four chord progressions. Titles: "Dead Animal (In The Wall)," "Quad Racer," "Uncertainty," and opening in cut "Addict." Sounds like they're having big boxes of fun but they need to strike out in new directions to get noticed.

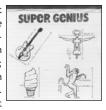
- L.A. Joe

SUPER GENIUS

supergenius.us

Great tunes, excellent production, perfect playing, insightful lyrics—a fantastic CD! Will this play in the clubs? NEVER. It's too bad—it's great stuff. Kids buy music, high school kids go to concerts, college kids go to clubs, young adults pick and

choose, but true adults (who don't really go out and spend \$ like the rest) are the ones who would probably appreciate this the most. I'm not saying this is for OLD people; I'm saying that this is for folks with more mature tastes and views. Maybe if they looked like four frat



kids in backwards baseball caps and bounced all over the stage like pogo sticks? I suppose there is more and more of this out there—and I'm glad. Quirky Randy Newman-types shouldn't be the only cats playing to this niche. It's like a much more palatable Barenaked Ladies. I don't know exactly what to say...I'll tell you what, though—I'm going to make sure and go see these guys. I'll bet they put on a hell of a show!

- Smash

ALOUD Don't Trust The Radio allthingsloud.com

This band's first impression for me didn't come with their music but rather their promotions - handing out promo CDs at The Abbey to pro-



mote themselves. Ambition and a friendly demeanor makes for a good first impression to some of us media people! I'm only sorry it took this long to get a review in. Anyway, it's a raw, live-feeling rock recording spiced with tinges of punk. Great energy and spirit even if the vocals are off at times - but that kind of fits the style of the music so it feels O.K., if that makes any sense...but rock 'n' roll doesn't have to make sense now, does it? Good tunes, not at all refined or polished, rough recording - but again seems to be right for this garagey genre - or should I say basement genre (the recording credits say "Recorded in [bassist] Ray's Basement"). P.S. Good promo photo.

- Debbie Catalano

TOKYO TRAMPS Bound For Glory tokyotramps.com

So I'm guessing the four of them are of Japanese descent what with the names of the band members. And they've got a girl playing bass and doing some of the singing. I



played in a band years ago with some Japanese folks. The band was called Go-Di-Go and I'll just bet these folks have heard of them as their playing style is similar. We've got simple rock 'n roll songs straight out of the '60s, '70s, '80s; pick your decade. It's a good-sounding group with their solid drummer and those two competent guitar players. Everything is nicely played and in tune but honestly, other than groups like Hootie, etc., its all a bit dated. I'm loving that melody and sweet organ pad on "Tchaiko" and "Security" rocks out nicely. Other titles: "Lift Your Head," "Betty Queen," and "Boogie Woogie to Be Free." Sounds like fun.

- L.A. Joe

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Rock/metal/funk band seeking drummer. Our influences include older Metallica, Tool, Fear Factory, Down. If interested email Twsted13@aol.com or depulso@yahoo.com

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Thrash metal project seeks drummer and keyboardist. Infl. Children of Bodom, Dimmu Borgir, Arch Enemy. Death/melodic hybrid. Dbl. bass skills, stamina, trans. to Boston. Contact Meg darkstarfairie2002@yahoo.com

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Central Connecticut metal/metalcore band currently seeking experienced, guitarist.prefer someone 20+. Influences include but not limited to:Starkweather, Dissolve, Mastodon, Bloodlet. Contact John at: writhemusic@aol.com

Slightly Mad '70s-2004 power rock band is now seeking a guitarist and keyboardist for shows this summer. Contact: Car Catavolo (978) 738-6929 or ccatavolo@yahoo.com

A progressive Christian metal band seeks a second guitarist who can play some leads and contribute some material. We are: Female vocals, guitar, drums, bass. Call Ted (617) 797-5561 / www.mylastmidnight.com

KEYBOARDIST WANT/AVL

Looking for a synth or guitarist interested in playing dance rock such as The Faint and La Tigra with a raw energy of at the drive in no drugs much party play good dont suck. 18-21 age. Allston call Kevin at (617) 548-0780 or email iamthecooter@yahoo.com

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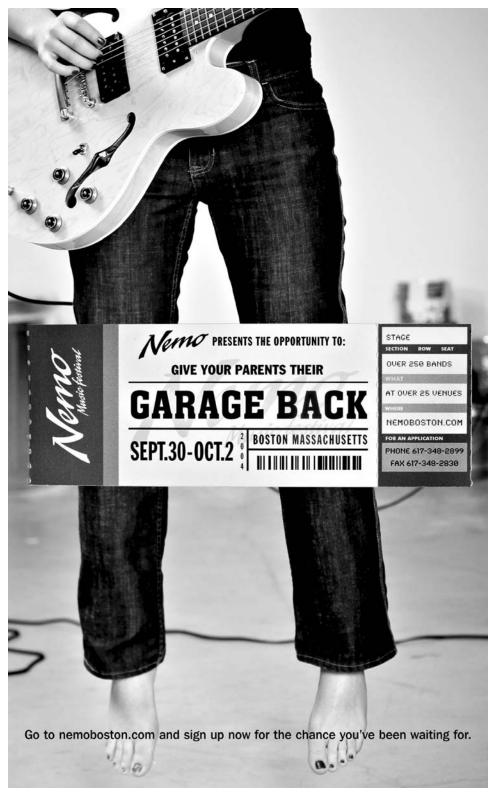
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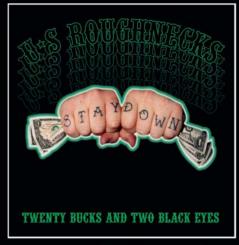
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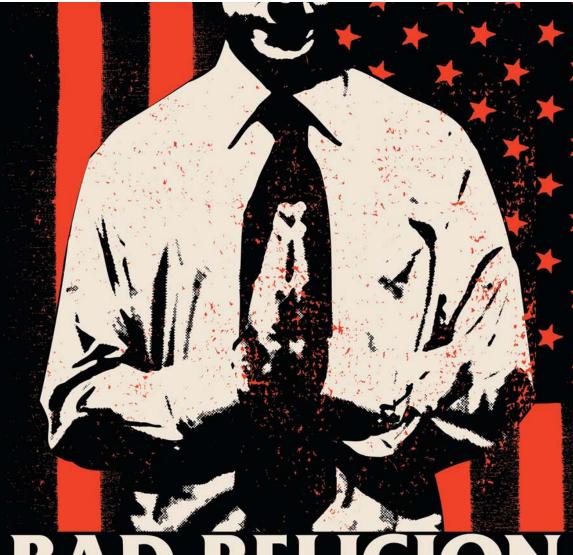
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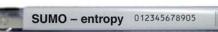
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